



THE
SEVEN SAGES,
TRANSLATED

out of Prose into Scots

Meeter by IOHN

ROLAND, in *Dalkeith*.



In elder dayes it hath oft-
times bene told,

That Rome hath bene a ci-
tie of the old

Of cunning Clarkeis, and
wonder balliant men:

As ancient ages make us
for to ken.

Wh'er all the world it had
preheminent,

And people made to it obedience: (route,

With great Captains, kings, knights, and Empe-

rene men of war, and cruell Conquerours

Of townes and towres, great villages and castles,

Triumphing far above their enemies,

Subduing them to serving servitude,

Not regarding their linage, kin nor blood,

Conquest great realms, lordships, & rouines braid,

What

That

The seven Sages.

Their Common-well so marvellous they made,
That all Countries and Kingdomes them about,
Of them fell feare great dreadour had and doubt,
That they on force behobed to make homage,
Whels hade lost both life and heritage:
For they were sorepleate of all riches,
Won into wars by marttall busines.
They took no cure of no mans labour nor fead,
So they became of all the world the head:
And had thereof the whole authoritie,
But this was not the time of Papistrie:
For from that time that Popes were made in Rom
Of all vertue that Citie was made tome.
And day by day from all vertue decrest,
Continually the self it ay opprest:
For thre strangers rose up in that Citie,
Which of before no wise would suffered be:
The Common-well cause they were aye again,
Wherein therefore they were not thold remaine.
But fra Popes came that noble Town within,
It did abound so soze in deavlie sin.
And that no state to cleargie was compares,
So well they treated these thre uncouth strangers
Which thre were these: the first lurking barren,
The second was young counsell and consent:
Singulare profite was the third I wish.
Whiche thre was cause to cause Rome go amisse.
And caude it losse the great triumphing name,
And to be cald the house of worlde shame,
Lost the great rowmes and worlde possessions,
That

The seven Sages.

That they conquest from diuerses other stonones,
All such become through wickednesse and vice,
Of the Papistes, and their soule Marchandice;
For they will cause a pound of molten leade
Bring them againe the weight of gold so red,
And cause the hippes of a dead Pow or skin,
Absolve you all of your most deadlie sin.
Incontinent in heaven up to be brought,
Contrare Gods will, whether hee would or nought,

¶ But not the lesse, long time before these dayes
An Emperour was, as the stories sayes,
Who heght to name Pontianus at right.
A noble man of wisdom and of might,
Guided his Realme by wisdom and vertue,
To his people examples daylie shew,
Of wisdom, wit and liberalitie,
Wherethrough the heart of all his folke won hee,
That none cared to ware with him their life,
A kings daughter hee had unto his wife,
Called Clara, a woman vertuous,
Faire and goodly, and wonder gracions:
Who a knave childe of him she did consave,
But him alone no more God to them gabe,
Who was called Dioclesiane to name,
Faire and well favoured, both of fashion and fame,
Who daylie grew in vertue and goodnesse,
Each man him lov'd for his great gentlenesse:
For he was courteous, comely and right kinde,
From all follie aliterlie declinde:
So when hee was seven yere old or nax by,

The seven Sages.

This Emprice tooke a marvellous maladie,
That she behov'd for to take heed on force,
With sore sicknesse so troubled was her corse:
Perceiving well by her intelligence,
For to eschew from death was no defence:
But of her life shortly to have an end,
So for her spouse the Emperour soone she send,
With humble heart, and inwardly praying,
That hee would come to her but taryng:
If ever hee would see her upon life,
So was fra hand direct soone a miste.
Post after post, where hee lay in warfare,
Soone till him came, and could the cause declare.
But more above, with wonder sozie heart,
With few horse men from his campe did depart:
And when hee came to the Emprice presence,
She said to him with humble reverence:
O my good Lord, howbeit that I bee sick,
Yee licence mee mine errand to you speake:
So that it bee not only your pleasour,
But als such like unto your great honour.
Hee said, Ladie, I see you in disease,
Notwithstanding say on what ere you please:
And it shall bee to mee no villanie,
So it eake not to your infirmitie.
My Lord, she said, this sicknesse I perceive,
Ere it depart will drive mee to my grave.
Hee said, Madame, bee yee of good comfort
Yee will recover your health, I trust at short,
For I shall send for all my digne Doctors,
Physicians,

The seven Sages.

Physicians and my Philosophers,
My cunning men, and my Mediciners,
My Chirurgians, and als my Potingers:
My Practicians which are subtle and slye,
That dayly dealeth with phlebotomie:
They will consult, and each one als perceave
All your sicknesse, and so health shall yee have.
For sicknesse is as naturall as heale,
Wherefore doubt not that death shall with you deale.
At this present, but yee shall sone recure.
Quoth shee, my Lord, of one thing I am sure:
This maladie so holds mee at the heart,
While I bee dead, no way it will depart:
Wherefore, my Lord, right humbly I require,
Ye would encline your heart to my desire.
Hee said, Desire at mee what ever ye will,
I will it grant, though it bee contrarie skill:
To comfort you, and helpe you from disease,
Wherefore say on, it shall not mee displease.
Shee said, my Lord, I thank you gretfullye.
Quoth hee, Madame, say on, what ever it bee.
Shee said, My Lord, please it your noble Grace,
Of my desire this is the verie race:
When I depart out of this present life,
It will you please to have another wife:
And as ye know wee have no child but one,
For never had but only him alone.
Which o'er all things next to your owne person
I would were well to this provision,
After your death with all wit and wisdom,

King

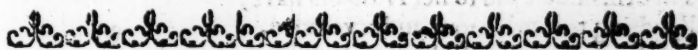
The seven Sages.

Rule his people, and guid this great Kingdome,
And ower all things my Lord, must I require,
Into this point yee will grant my desire:
What your Empryce, perchance what euer she be,
Upon my Son, have none authoritie:
No governance, power nor yet guiding,
But yee him put to other nourishing,
Far from her sight, and from her companie,
So that effect that he ay vicelesse be,
Of all vices, and such things as goes wrong,
And aye to be great cunning men among.
My Lord, heartlie this humble I require,
Into this point to fulfill my desire:
For well I know displeasures are to come,
That hee shall die, or else hee shall be dumbe,
Wherethrough onelie his life hee will recure,
My Lord, I know but doubt this shall be sure.
Hee said Ladie, your will: yee shall not want,
Though it were more right heartlie I it grant,
For that it is my desire as well as yours,
It shall hee done, Madame at your pleasures.
Shee said My Lord I thank you with mine heart,
God save your Grace: For now I must depart,
This beeing said, shee took a fell passion,
And a long space shee lay in deadlike swoon.
So in short time withouten more remead,
Her naturall debt shee complected of, dead.
With all triumph her funerall service,
Was duellie done as that time was the guise:
Long time after the Emperour made mourning.

And

The eleven Sages.

And all his Court for her sore departing:
No minstrell mirth, nor yet no merlinesse,
Into his Hall was sent, nor no blythnesse,
But heavinesse, great dule and gravitie,
Into the Court, and all the Companie,
For that good Queen all solace was away,
Did weare dule-weed each one for yeare and day.



MORALITIE.

OF this matter something wee may collect,
Of this Ladie having so great respect,
And inward love unto her Son alone:
Of her own health shee took but little rest,
But thought shee would his welfare not neglect:
Before her selfe to death shee would dispone,
Which caused her such matters to propone,
To her husband, for the samine effect,
Her Son to reigne after that shee was gone.

Also yee may consider the great care,
The thought and minde shee took both here and aire;
Anent her Son shee suffering sore sicknesse,
Providing als for his wealth and welfare:
Desiring him of cumber to bee cleare,
With the new Queen should have none entresse
Nor shee with him in any businesse.
For some causes that might occur perchance,
That shee should have of him no governance.

Also appeares some part of Prophecie.
And great foresight hath been in this Ladie:

The seven Sages.

Pêrils to come so perfectly to know,
Shee beeing toucht with fore infirmicie,
Praying to put her son from companie
Of all the Court, and als of Ladies aw,
And in special! from his mother in law:
Inconveniencies to eschew that might bee,
So shee desired her son him to withdraw.

The heartie love also yee may perceave
That this Ladie did to her Husband have,
Rendring to him honour and reverence,
And hee to her also all things hee gave,
That shee desired, or at him shee would crave,
Not regarding though it had beene offence,
And for her sake when shee was dead and hence,
Hee commanded that no blythnesse should bee
For yeare and day into his companie.

Therefore I say to you in marriage,
Both into old, and into tender age:
What ever chance yee should have charitie,
If ill words come, then let your anger swage,
Give place to yre, and harberie not outrage:
Crabbed at once no wise yee should both bee:
A mecke answer flockins melancholie,
Yee are conjoynd one flesh, and soules two,
Then keepe good love, the Scripture biddeth so.

How the *Emperour* committed and delivered his Sonne to the seven Doctors of *Rome* to learne.

This Emperour upon a time he lay
Into his bed, and to himselfe could say,
I have no bairnes, but one Son to my aire,

The seven Sages.

I think it best that hee were put to laire,
Since hee is young and into tender age,
To leare wisdom hee will take moze courage,
After my death this realme that hee may guide,
This I think best in time for to provide.
So on the morne hee cride after his clothes,
And in due time but moze abode uprose:
Calde all his Lords, and counsell to him soone,
In this matter what they thought to be done:
Shewing at length to them the whole matter
To his Ladie what hee had promised aice.

They answered all, My Lord, there is in Rome
Seven wisest men that is in Christendome:
Who in learning all other they prevaile,
In all wisdom and science liberall.
They are but doubt the seade of Salomon,
For to discusse, probleme, or question,
Let a message to them be sent but maire,
Delyber them your son unto the laire.
Of their counsell the Emperour was content,
For these Doctors a message soone was sent,
Under his seale, and als his owne hand write,
To the Doctors hee bade delyber it.
So soone as they the letters all had reade,
To their voyage but farie soone them sped:
When they came to the Emperours presence,
They salust him with laude and reverence,
On their best wise, as to them could effeare.
Hee said to them, Ye are right welcome here.
I aske at you, Have ye any knowledge;

where.

The seven Sages.

Wherefore I send to you seven my message:
They answered him the cause no way we know,
While that your grace wilt vouchsafe for to shew,
Your gracious will, when ye have shewen us to,
That to fulfill our power we shall do.
To whom he said I thank you Masters all,
Now unto you mine errand shew I shall:
One Son alone, no more Children I have,
For all my time, no more God to me gave,
Apparantlie he is to be mine heire,
Wherefore I would he were put to the lairer
To cunning men, for to have their doctrine,
And in youth-head be under Discipline:
To that effect after my satall debt,
Into my place with honour he be set,
To rule this Realme with wisdom and Justice,
Which in a Prince should reigne alwayes,
Wherefore I would ye seven should him receiue,
And him to learne, and into guiding have:
And ye shall be rewarded well therefore,
So whole and sound againe ye him restore.
They thanked him all seven with reuerence,
That hee to them of his Son gave credence,
But the first Master called Pantillas,
Began and said, because he oldest was.
My Lord, I shall, and please your noble Grace,
Cause your Son within seven yeres space,
Be as cunning in all the seven Science,
Of wit, wisdom, and all intelligence,
As I, and all my marrowes, that here stands,

The seven Sages.

O any man within your bounds and lands,
So that yee will deliuer him to mee:
This shall I do in paine of honestie.

The second Master, named Lentulus,
These words said unto the Emperour thus,
And please your Grace deliuer him to me,
Within sixe yeres he shall haue more Cleargie,
More cunning craft in all the seven Science,
For I, and all that now are in presence:
And as yee know I haue serbed your Grace,
Since I was man in all my lifes space:
And for reward I seek none other thing,
But your own Son to haue in governing.

Then spake the third, that named was Craton,
With your good grace I sailbe the Sea upon:
In great perils and dangerous warfare,
And of your Grace reward I seek no maire,
To be so good, you mee deliuer would,
Your onelie Son, in governing to hold,
And I promise within yers fife,
He shall be more cunning and scientt be,
For I, and all my marrowes here about,
Unto your Grace this shall I do but doubt.

Then spak the fourth, his name was Malquidrack
And please your Grace my serbice for to take,
In good season, in thanks and als pleasures:
For I myself, and my progenitours,
Haue serbed you, and yours, our liues space,
And no reward desire I of your Grace,
But to bonchsafe on mee so good credence,

The seven Sages.

As for to learne your Son perfect science,
And for to bee of cunning moze perfite,
For I and all my marrowes can indite.
This shall hee do within next yeres foure,
For I science and cunning shall giue ob'r.

Then spake the first, Iosephus was his Name,
Lord, I am old, and neber in defame:
On your counsell I haue bene many yere,
Would yet leaue mee your one Son for to lere,
I shall him teach but doubt in yeres thre,
As great cunning, and as perfect Cleargie,
As I my selfe and all my marrowes can,
For else yee shall call mee no honest man.
For moze reward of your Grace I desire,
Though all my time I haue ser'd your Empire.

Then spake the first, was named Cleopas,
A noble man and cunning Clark hee was:
And said such like as the late said befoze:
Of your good grace reward I seeke no moze,
But your one son to haue in governing,
Informe and teach, and into science bring.
In cunning hee shall be within two yere,
That hee shall haue no pereguall nor yere.
For moze reward of you now aske will I,
Which your good Grace I trust will not deny.

Then said the seventh great Master and Doctor
Unto your Grace I will do such pleasure,
Giue mee your son in credence and guiding,
Within one yere I shall giue him learning,
So profoundly of the sciences seven,

And

The seven Sages.

And of all Science underneath the heaben:
That in wisdome he shall have no compare,
Unto your Grace this shortly I declare:
For gifts of gold, no geare I not regard,
Nor for my labours I cobet no reward,
But your good will, when the yeare is shortly gone.
The Emperour heard, and thanked them eachone:
And said, I am indebted to you all,
Unrecompensed, none of you there he shall:
But not the lesse, since I find you so kind,
And with good wills have shoven mee your mind:
If I should him commit to one of you,
Then all the rest might well believe and trow,
That to that one I had more affection
Than to the rest, which should cause dissention,
Discord, enble, and also variance,
Which in no sort among such men should chance:
Therefore to you consundlie all in one
Here I commit my Son Dioclesiane:
My afaird Watne, and eke mine only aile,
With you to be instructed well in aile;
And him to guide in every honest sort,
Whiles to wisdome, and whiles to game and sport,
As ye will answer each one unto mee,
In paine of credence, and of your honestie:
For be he well, even so I think my self,
Do as ye please as now no more I tell.
These digne Doctors, the sweet language hearing
Of their good Lord; and also perceiving
The great credence, and also the kindnesse,

That

The seven Sages.

That hee had shewen unto their simplenesse,
They thanked him eachone upon their knees,
Man after man, all seven in their degree:
Saying to him, that his Grace should be sure,
Of their labours great diligence and cure:
The Emperour took his Son by the hand,
And bade that hee at their bidding should stand:
And in no sort that hee should them offend,
Unto the time againe hee for him send.
And so at short the Child delivered her,
Whom they receiue with all humillitie.
This being done, each one they took good night,
To Romes Court, the way they held on right.
These seven Masters their voyage passing on,
One of them said, who named was Craton,
To his fellowes, saying, my brethren deare,
Since wee this Child in governing have here:
I think not best, to Romes town that wee ride,
If we list well this Child governe and guide.
For diuerse causes and impediments,
That may occurre by inconuenients,
Wyting the Child to many sport and play,
And to neglect his studie day by day.
For when great men get knowledge what he be,
They will cobet daylie his compantie:
So from studie he shall be abstracted,
And we all seven with great displeasure latched,
The other sixe said all with one consent,
His counsell was good and conuenient,
And was said to the purpose by and by,

And

The seven Sages.

And with good will to the same would apply:
This to escheto, I would remead were found,
For well I know within a little ground,
To build upon, there is a proper place,
Which to us all were pleasure and solace,
From Romes Town but thre miles distant,
What thing wee need, wee misser not to want:
Let us there make an house both rowme and square
Where at quiet the Child, may learne his laire.
Wee shall cause paint upon the walles about,
The seven Science, with great stories all out,
So that this Child, may see, vñe and look,
And take doctrine, as well as in a book,
This counsell then appeased them euerie eachone,
The house was bigged, soon of lyme and stone
And well completed, as it best could effeite:
Wherein they all studied the seven yere:
Which been out run, and all complet together,
The seven Masters among them did consider,
What they would examine Deoclesiane,
When that their time of the seven yeres was gane
If that he was expert into Science,
Considering they had done diligence,
Panillas said, I cannot tell truelie,
How our Scholler examinde well shall bee:
Then said Craton, I shall that wel devise,
Into his bed on sleeping when he lyes,
Under each hook of his bed wee shall lay,
An Olive lease, then when approaches day.
If he perceives, soon after his waking,
That his bed is remobed any thing:

That

The seven Sages.

When wee may know by our intelligence
Wee is repleate of all the seven Science.
This being done, earlie in the morning
The Child wakned before the Sun rising;
And lifted up his eene unto the Skie,
And to the roofe of the house ser ventlie,
And both to and fro sharply casting his eene,
In such fashion, before they had not scene.
The seven Masters perceiuing perfitely
How his ingine was raised so quickly,
They said, Wherefore looke yee so fast about:
What moveth you? or what have yee in doubt?
Shew us in plain, wee shall cause to amend it,
If any thing hath you in heart offend it.
So marvell have, my good Masters, said hee,
For I am brought in a great fantasie,
Which hath mee made amazed, and right affeird:
For in my sleepe to mee I thought appeared,
That the Roofe-tree of all this whole maisoun
Unto the Earth was quite declyned down:
And then againe in twinkling of our eyes
It was up'lifted an hundred thousand graces:
Which put mee in a felloun feare but dout:
Then his Masters each one him round about
Perceiued well by good Experience
Hee was full filled of all the seven Science.
If hee have da yes, and in good companie,
A man of wit, and wisdom hee shall be:
That in the w orld shall none be to him pare,
So at this time wee leave this young child here.

MORA.

The seven Sages. MORALITAS.

WEE may perceiue none Emperour,
Nor King should work at their pleasure
Without a good counsell.
Good counsell is the Procurour,
For to set forward good labour,
And perils doth expell.

This Emperour he would do nought,
While his Lords were before him brought:
And so they were right soone.
At them his counsell then hee sought,
And they him shew their minde and thought:
What was best to bee done.

In one voyce they concluded thair,
That hee should put his Son to laire,
With cunning men of wit.

Because the counsell did it declare,
Incontinent but any more.

Forth with fulfilled it,

For as the Mother did provide,
The Father on the other side.

For his Son did forese,
From purpose would no longer hide,
But to the Doctors in that tide,
His son delivered hee.

Though all these seven had science seen,
Yet may perceiue that they have been,
Of their own fantasie.

All casten into courage cleane,
Each one another to preuech,

And purchas'd dignitie.

Each

The seven Sages.

Each one they took a diuerſe date,
And promiſde by their own concear,
More large than they would do,
Who were far by their own eſtate.
For to pretend to go the gate,
That they ſhould not come to.

But to the Emperour took well in heed,
He thought he would not thole the ſeade,
Of all, and pleaſe but one.
For that he found a good remede,
For the whole ſeven without more plead,
The Child haue with them tane.

How the Emperour by counſel of his Princes
and Lords of his Empire wedded another
wiſe.

In this meane time the Princes of honour,
And the great Lords came to the Emperour,
And ſaid, my Lord, and pleaſe your noble Grace,
Here are we come to ſhew how ſtands the caſe,
But one young Child, we knowe no more ye haue,
And pleaſed God, we woulde that ye had maie.
And it may ſtand by fatal deſtine,
That your own Son may inlake, ſaile and die:
As God forbid that ſuch a thing ſhould chance,
Yet not the leſſe we woulde make purueyance,
When were wee all of a new native thing,
Made deſtitute aboue us for to reigne.
Wherethrough ſtrange folke and uncouth nations,
Might conqueſſe us and all our generations.

Which

The seven Sages.

Which neber was since this Emperre began:
Conqueist, overthrow with any mortall man:
Since Romulus who builded Romes town,
Was neber man that had Dominion:
Of this Empire, but noble natthe Kings,
And to avoide so great and perilous things:
This is the cause we are come to your Grace,
To shew you all the matter and the race:
That such a thing is right able to bee,
To put the Realme sworth of such seopardie,
We would y^e took some honest gay Ladie:
Your noble Quen and bedfellow to bee:
To that effect succession for to have,
And your Emperre from these dangers to save.
The Emperour then hearing all their sayes,
What such thing meant of the matter and cause.
He thanked them an hundred thousand syke,
And said, he would do as they did devise:
Of their counsell right well content he was,
And them requirde to purpose for to passe,
A Ladie get that was of tender age,
Both good and faire, and come of hie linage:
A cleane Virgine, and lustie to beholde,
Then shall I do the same thing that y^e would,
Wed her to wise, and crown her to my Quen,
Into this case let your wisdom be seen.
So they departed then from the Emperour,
Devise their wayes of wisdom and valour,
To seek this Quen through many lands they pass,
While they came to a Countrie at the last,

The seven Sages.

Called Cicyll, which had a noble King,
Who royallie into his Realme did reigne:
With great puissance riches and honour,
Who had a Paide of all fairenesse the flour.
To his Daughter of foureteene yeeres of age,
Noble, courteous, and pleasant of visage:
With all vertue that in women might be,
And wise at will; also apparantlie:
Whom they desire at this good noble King,
In marriage to the Emperour bzing,
And make her Queen of all the whole Emppze,
This noble King granted to their desire:
The Lords of Councell and Ambassadors:
Were then dispatched with pleasure and honours.
And brought with them this noble gay Ladie,
Which their yong Queen, & als Empprice should be
They hel'd up sayles with all their cleane courage,
With manlie might came sozward their voyage:
Upon the sea they suffered great perrell,
In home-comming, by soze storme and trabel,
Waltering with wind outthroggh the muddie wades
The Bozeall blasts so boldlie on them blawes.
That they were faine, and soyfull at the last,
To save their libes, soz to cut their maine Mast:
Cut their Cabls, and ober-board cast their geare,
All of their libes they stood into such feare.
Some of them said, It was a most shrewd signe,
Of a good lucke, such a Quene home to bzing:
Wherethrough they were all in point soz to tye,
And with not what would be the latter syne.

Some

The seven Sages.

Some said againe, all was come for the best,
Shee was witlesse, howbeit for me them oppress,
So eachone said, as they that time best thought:
So at due time to their own Cost was brought.
As soon they came unto their kindlie Coast,
Down they threw their sailes, and their good Ships lost.
Then word soon came unto the Emperour,
That all the Lords were landed with pleasure,
And with them brought a noble young Ladie,
Which to the King his wedded wife should bee.
The Emperour could be proclaimed thogh Roms town
That every Lord, knight, Marques, and Barron,
In best array to make them all readie,
With faire fashion to meete that young Ladie:
Which but delay was done with diligence,
And so they gave this Ladie all presence.
In rich array as they could best devise,
With all triumph, and into their best wise,
To their citie they did her all convoy:
With all gladnesse, mirth, melodie and joy.
And when shee came unto this noble Town,
The Bells did reigne with honour and renown.
The cloths of gold was spread through all the street
When shee lighted to go upon her feet,
The rich badkins, the costlie velvet webbes,
The brodered workes, and the rich royall robes,
Which on the staires were spread so high on hie,
It was pleasure to any man to see:
With all other worldes vaine fantasie,
That mans byaine and ingine could devise,

And

The seven Sages.

And so at last came in the Emperour,
With his great Lodes of riches and honour:
Gave his Ladie his person and presence,
With all triumph, renoune and reverence:
And her embracd, as could him well effeire,
And said, Ladie, ye are right welcome here.
Then the great joy that in the citie was
My weake ingine can no wise well compasse.
So on the morne when that the day was light,
Unto the Church they brought this Ladie bright,
With all triumph, great mirth and melodye,
With mens wit that could devised bee:
Convoied with kings, noble Princes and Lodes,
As at such times agrees well and accord.
Then followed her the noble Emperour,
With all his Lodes that were of great valour,
Stout men of armes, into their chiefest weedes,
Ryding at right upon their stalwart steedes.
Als with him came diuers great kings & knights,
Dukes, Barons, Carles, and many worthy wights
With Trumpet, shalme, drum, swash, and Clarion
Harp, Lute, Organe, Cymbale, and Cymphion:
Making their mirth all into good order,
Heraulds of Armes into their coat Armour:
Past on before as it was most seemlie
In their owne state, conforme to their degree.
While they came to the royall Church of Rome,
Which was the head of Churches in Christendome.
There lighted they with mirth and merrineste,
For to compleate the band of holyneste,

That

The seven Sages.

That God devisde betwixt woman and man,
When he this world first create and began:
Of that Citie the great Bishop was there:
With all his Clarkes of great wisdom and laire
This band being complēt in Gods name,
With mirth and joy past to the Pallace hame:
Where there was made banquet with melodie,
With all kin mirth and pleasant mensrallie:
While that night came, thē each man thoght it best
To quiet passe, and take the nights rest.
So this Ladie but any taryng,
Shē past to bed with her husband the King.
And so obtainde the great favour and love
Of her good Lord that it could not remoue.
And of her love hē took so great delite,
That the other Quēn he had forgot her quite:
And all his love was cast on this new Quēn,
As he befoze had never married bēn.
Yet not the lesse all the dayes of their life,
God thought he wold al bairnes from them depzive
So them betwixt they no succession had.
Which made this Quēn right sorowfull and sad.
Saying, Husband, one thing I you require,
If yē wold grant, right heartlie I desire.
Because longtime this Empricedid perceiue,
No kind of Child shēe was able to haue.
Shēe turnde her sailes into another wind,
Where that shēe might some subtilnesse cause find,
Into her bed where that shēe was lyand,
In a mozning with her Spous and Husband.

Shēe

The seven Sages.

Shee saith, my Lord, and please your noble grace,
Betwixt us two, is chanc'd an heauie case:
That we no way can get succession,
Which sad mine heart, and does me great passion
But would your Grace one thing unto me grant,
Betwixt us two a Childe we should not want.
Quoth hee, That thing devise how that ye can,
For that exceeds the wit of any man.
For to get Bairnes, since God will not them grant
Then force it is, both ye and I them want.
Shee said, my Lord, it is unto mee shewn,
Ye haue a Son which is not to me known:
With seven Pastors most wisest upon ground,
And hee himself none wiser can bee found.
Would ye him bring to Court in my presence,
I should do all deuour and diligence,
Him to intreat into so good fashion,
That all should say through great Romes town,
Not onelie said, but also should be shewn,
That hee were of mine own two liues boyn:
And since so is that I cannot conceiue,
I nelle your Son as mine own I would haue,
My Lord, this is the asking I require:
Beseeching you to fulfill my desire,
Yet not the lesse her minde was and her thought,
In subtiltie and all with malice wrought:
Imagining daylie the Childs dead,
Though his father took not such thing in head:
Hee said, Ladie, that will I not deny,
What ever ye aske, enamoured soule I.

The seven Sages.

Into your love, that force compelleth me,
What will ye aske, denyde it shall not be:
Wherefore since I the secrets of mine heart,
Shewes to you plaine, to me kepe ye your part:
As for my Son, it is long time by-past,
And diuerse yeares since that I saw him last.
Yet not the lesse, to accomplish your will,
I shall with speed a Messenger send him till:
And cause him come, and als his Masters all,
What he can do, both heare and see ye shall.
For I beleue he hath bene diligent,
In his Studie, and in Science frequent,
And for to learne wit, knowledge, and wisdom,
That after me he may guide his Kingdome.
She said, Lord, that it be so, God grant,
For that same cause I would no wise him want,
But if she said these words with her heart:
He will perceiue by processe afterwart:
The Emperour soon caused make a Plaine,
The Messenger he was direct betwene.
Into great hast and expedition,
Unto the seven great Masters of renown.
Incontinent under the paine of death,
And no lesse paine, than wanting of their head,
Should bring his Son to him at Whitsonday,
All excuses being cleane put away.
The Messenger with speed despatched was,
To the Doctors the hie gate can he passe:
And the writing delibered soone hath he,
Unto the seven Doctors of dignite.

The seven Sages.

Who it receiv'd with all obedience,
Humillitie, honour, and reverence.

MORALITIE.

IT is a plague perilous and a great dispaire,
A realme to bee destitute of a native aire,
Where kinde Captaines holds Courts, no cause is of care,
The Common-wealth increaseth more and more.
By the contrarie againe,
Unkindly Captaines overthrowes,
And Common-wealth downe drawes,
And leades not the old lawes,
But contrarie workes plaine.

This was the most motive, cause, and the quarrell
That causde these Princes compeare, to show all perrill,
The great danger and doubt, and the cause haile:
Both for Common-wealth, and crown, if aires chanches faile:
There was but only one,
Which was the Emperours son:
Therefore this matter they moane,
To cause him take a Queene,
If this aire were gone.

And so with speed but slowe counsell applye,
Cause it was the Common well hee durst not deny it:
But yet his first Queenes desire in some part past by it,
That to the Court the child brought, where hee was fore invyit.
The Emperour not knew,
Yee know of old this true tale,
Nice is the Nightingale,
The Emperour gave credence haile;
And never word trew.

When women speak fairest they are most false found,
They make sweet liquor swim above, and gale is at the ground

The seven Sages.

They show them like a turtle Dove, and bites as a Hound.
The Emperour was deceived sore, as soone was after found,
They were ay, and shall bee
So inquisitive both night and day,
The Emperour could no wise say nay:
But men should not trow what they say,
So oft because they lie.

How the seven Masters after the sight of the
Emperours Letters would see the course of
the Firmament and Planets, whether it was
good to obey his Command or not.

A S soone as these seven Masters had ob'se'en
The Emperours write, & understood it clæ'n:
On the next night all seven with one consent
Went to espie the stars and firmament,
To take journey if it was prosperous,
Or contrarie way if it was dangerous,
For to fulfill the Emperours command,
Or if they durst the samine to gaine stand.
Anone they spie into the firmament
A Cometic star which troubled their intent:
Perceiving well by the star if that they
Their journey tooke, and rode that samine day,
To them affixt by the Emperours command,
The child but doubt in great perrill should stand.
For the first word that hee spake in presence
Of his father in open audience,
Should bee the cause of his most shamefull death:

This

The seven Sages.

This to eschew they could finde no remead,
Whereof they were all sad and wonder sozie,
And wist not well to trabel 02 to tarie.
Another star then they beheld also,
Shewing if they to the King would not go.
And keep their day which was affixt them to,
To want their heads there was no more ado.
One of them said, wheretwo evils do appeare,
Let us that take, wherein lyes least danger.
It is better, sarelle I say for me,
For this Emperour that we all seven should die:
And other seven such like as we are all,
02 this young man should suffer any thral,
Therefore let us all seven with one intent,
Our own persons to the Emperour present,
And let the childe at home alone remaue,
To see if we tarie, 02 comes againe:
And so they were all seven right sorrowfow.
Pansing alwayes what meane, fashon, 02 how,
They might eschew this inconvenient:
So this young man come down incontinent:
From his chamber where hee was studying,
His seven Masters hee there found all sitting.
Right sorrowfull and sad in countenance,
He then requirde what was the cause and chance
Of their sadnesse. They said, thus stands the case,
We all beleeue to have had of you solace:
Blythnesse and joy, and also good reward,
But now fortune hath bene to you so hard,
That all such things to great mishap will turne:
Wherefore

The seven Sages.

Wherefoze wee have all great cause for to mourne,
For all our joy and our felicitie,
Is like to turne to great adversitie:
Wee said, Mistres, I pray you to mee shew,
How the case stand'th, yet yee will let me know.
They said, The cause that wee can shew to you,
Into the selfe is verie sorrowfoule:
For your father the Emperour and King,
Unto us seven hath sent a sharpe writting:
Commanding us withouten tarrying,
On paine of lives, that we you to him bring:
Incontinent at the next Pentecost,
These his writtings he hath sent with the Post.
To what effect, we know not his intent,
But we all seven have spied the Firmament:
The Planets eke, and also the Starres cleare,
And we can see none other thing appeare.
But hastelie without any remead,
If yee speake once, yee shall thole sudden deade,
If wee delay, and bring you not him till,
Our death is sight, and in your fathers will.
The Child answerde again right humble,
I soze repent that such a thing should bee:
Can yee not find in that case no remead,
But either I or yee to suffer deade?
Yet must I passe and all the starres espy,
If I can find anie remead thereby:
That may put off that deablevolent houre,
And satisfie my father the Emperour,
Incontinent he visses over his booke.

The

The seven Sages.

Then after that unto the starres hee lookes,
Among the rest a proper star he saw,
That was right cleare, perfect and wonder (maio):
Whereby right well considered he the case,
If that he could abstaine seven dayes space:
From all speaking, and hold himself as dum,
All such perill hee cleanly should overcome,
And all their lifes in no perill should bee,
Which star hee let all his seven Pastors see:
And said, Pastors behold and well perceiue,
If I my self as dumbe man may me haue:
Seven dayes but speach, and then on the eight day,
All the perill I shall abide away:
And ye are seven of all the world most wise,
I thinke it is but a small enterpryse:
Each one of you to save my life one day,
When that is done, then some thing shall I say,
That ye and I from all perill shall bee,
The Pastors seven concluded perfectlie.
All that he said was wonder full and true,
For by the star the samine well they knew:
And rendered thanks to the power diuine,
That their Beholler had so perfect ingine.
Of cleare cunning, such a star to consider,
Whereby that they should be safe al togidder,
And out of doubt, and all danger of dead,
Seven dayes put by, himself to finde remead.

The first Pastor, Pantillas, was his name,
Said, that hee should under the paine of shame,
For the first day befoze the King to stand,

The seven Sages.

To save his life, pearcellie he took in hand:
Quoth Lentullus, which was the next Doctour,
I take in hand your life for to succour:
The second day: And so said all the rest,
Their day about, so long as seven did last,
This being said, all seven with one consent,
They clad this Child in new abilement,
In golden Cloathes, as effectuall his estate,
They lape on horse and forward made the gate,
To Romes town with all the speed they had,
For to obey as the Emperour them bade.

MORALITAS.

IT were well done, ere we our voyage took,
Or yet journey, either by sea or land,
Upon the starres or firmament to look,
If that voyage with godlinesse do stand,
And in no sort that it brake the command.
Of God, alone- nor do him none offence.
The starres I mean to bee mans conscience.

As these Doctors ere they to journey went,
The firmament they would first passe and spy:
Where they perceiue a great impedement,
By diuerse starres appearing in the Sky:
For to remaine, shew them good cause and why
The Kings precept aliterlie to gaine stand.
Yet some reliefe the Child himself he fand.

God him granted, and such grace to him gave,
To finde a way that they all safe might bee,
By his Masters a proper star per save,
Which all the seven could not per save nor see
Whereby thy might their journey passe safely

The seven Sages.

Conditionallie, for that hee could bee dume,
Unto the space, seven days were gone and come.

Wherefore wee all may bee right wonder fure,
The grace of GOD to no man is obstant:
As to the rich, even likewise to the poore,
As to the olde, even so to the infant.
His treasure is to all so abundant,
So simply given, so liberall and so free,
To them it seekes with all humilitie.

As the Gryphon, and als the great Goshalke
Is at all time of wing most wonder wight,
Unto their prey no kinde of birde will balke:
Yet then the Sparhalke is as swift of flight,
As the Grayphon, and as sharp of her sight:
Will catch as well such birds as shee hath use;
As the Grayphon will catch to him a goose.

Even so a Page, or yet a young Prentice,
When they are but lanelic pug to the warke:
By quicke ingyne, studie and good service,
Hee may prevaile his Master at the marke:
Even so did this young man and cunning Clark,
Perceived a Star which his Masters oversaw,
Howbeit they were longer learnde in the law.

It is oft seene a sober simple man,
To a great man counsellor may bee,
By GODS grace perchance as well hee can,
Give good counsell, as they of greater gree,
Who are uplifted into authoritie:
For why? the Bee that is right weake of wing,
Home to her hyve, sweet hony shee will bring.

Brevd

The seven Sages.

*Brevis in volatilibus est apis, & initium dulcoris,
huius fructus illius. Ecclesi. 12.*

How the Emperour rode to meet his son
comming from the studie, with
great pompe and pride.

And so as they had entred into voyage,
The poasts ran with all hastie message
To Romes towne, and told the Emperour
That his one son with all haste and labour
Was comming home on horse the readie way,
His fathers will and precepts to obey.
Then his father incontinent can be call
His great Princes, and other Lords all:
And had them bee in readinesse eachane,
He would go meet his son Dioclesiane.
The seven Pastors then perfectly knowing
The Emperour with his Court was cumming
Unto the child, all in one voice they said,
Wee thinke it best some danger to adoe,
That wee all seven passe into the citle,
And yee forwarde passe with your companie:
In the meane time that wee may all provide
Some help, that may put by this cursed tie:
And wee shall do all that wee can or may
For your supplie, each one to keepe one day.
The Child answerd, as yee will please mee,
Remember yet on my necessitie:
In great danger I wot that I will stand
Therefore thinke on what yee have tane in hand.

D

They

The Ieuen Sages.

They took their leave at him sorrowfully,
Then all they rode toward Romes citie,
So sorrowward came Dioclesiane ryding,
And lookes on far, saw his father comming:
And as they met off his horse lighted down,
To his father hee made him readie bowen,
Knæling on knee with all obedience,
Then his father with love and reverence
About the neck oft times hee took and kist,
That hee was dumb his father yet not wist.
Mine own dear son, ye are welcome hee said,
Of your welfare I am right wonder glad.
How is it with you, I pray you let mee know,
For it is long afoze since I you saw.
Then this yong man full right man like and meek
Bowde down his head, and nothing would hee speak.
Wherefoze his father marveild greatly,
That hee againe not answered instantly;
Yet hee compass into his minde againe
By his matters that hee was so constrainde,
And commaunded that hee should speake nothing,
Hee on horse back by any way ryding,
So home they came out through the great citie,
Of Romes town with great solemnitie.
While they came to the Emperours pallice,
Where that there was many antique devise,
And off their horse with speed they lighted down,
With great triumph, honour, and als renown.
The Father led his son in by the hand
Into the hall, where many were byt and,

And

The seven Sages.

And set him down beside him at the dease,
The Heraulds bade some silence all, and cease.
When son he said, now yee will speak to mee,
Your seven Wastets how do they, tell, let see:
How does your self? for it is long ago,
Since I you saw, the suth it is even so.
Yee are welcome to mee with heart and minde.
So then the child his head hee so inclinde:
As hee would say, I thank you ffather dear,
What e're he thoght there was no man might hear.
Whereat his father marveld gretfully,
And in a part hee looked earnestly:
And said, tell mee withoutten many sawes,
What yee speak not the manner and the cause?
Hee answerd not, but bowed down his head,
The Emperour saw that there was no remead:
Hee pangsde in minde, of his son not content,
So the Emperesse got word incontinent,
Whereof shee was wonder ioyous and glaid,
To her Ladies with merite minde shee said,
Now will I go Dioclesiane to see,
Wherefore that yee my best clothing bring mee:
And so anone shee went down to the bath,
Where that full soone Dioclesiane shee saw,
Upon the dease beside the Child sat down,
Is this your son, my Lord, should hee wke your crown?
And hath bene teacht by all the seven Doctors,
Hee is to mee welcome with all favours.
Hee is my son, the Emperour saw againe,
But hee speakes not, whereof I am notaine

The seven Sages.

I know nothing how it is fallen by chance,
By devillrie, or by Gods ordinance:
But all the time to mee since hee is come,
I hear nothing, but alwayes hee is dum.
Shee said, my Lord, belyve; him to mee,
If ever hee speak, that yee shall hear and see:
I shall him cause with words fair and meek,
That I doubt not but hee will to mee speak.
The King said, Go away with her, and rise,
The child hee rose on his most humble wise:
Inclining low with all obedience,
To his father rendring good reverence;
To the chamber with the Emperesse hee went,
But I helieve it please not his intent.

MORALITAS.

That it is written well wee know

Into the book of Exodus:

When God to Moses gave the law

On Mount Sinai that hill so hie:

Into that book there finde may wee

Amongst the ten Commandments;

That wee obedient should bee

And hold in honour our parents.

So did this child when that hee saw

His father by the way cummand:

Down off his horse hee lighted low,

On his knees tooke him by the hand:

Als when his father gave command

Him for to speak; hee bowde his head,

With humble heart to him meanand,

I dare not speak for fear of dread,

Such

The seven Sages.

Such thing his Father no wise kend,
But when the Quene came in presence
Incontinent hee bade him wend
With her to chamber, and go hence
The child with all obedience
Past at command, and howbeit hee knew,
That it would cause a great offence,
Knew well that race that hee would rew.

Even so wee should bee all and one
To our parents obedient:
And if our owne bee dead and gone
The principall is remanent,
That is the Father Al-potent,
Hee feedes us with his holy hands
Then let us see our whole intent,
On our best way keepe his command.

How the Empresse led *Dioclesiane* to her
chamber, for to make merrinesse,
which appearingly hee withstood.

The Empresse then some Ladies cald her till,
Saying, this is mine utter minde and will,
That ye prepare my chamber and my bed
With silk badkins that it bee well overlpyed:
And all the house overlpyed with tapistrie.
They said, Madame, as ye bid so shall bee.
Then the Empresse took *Dioclesiane*
By the right hand, and to the chamber is gane,
And causd aboide all the chambers anone,
None stayde therein but they two them alone.

The seven Sages.

Shee thought it best none other there should bide,
And set him down befoze her owne bed side:
And said to him these words in a par,
O best beloved Dioclesiane mine heart!
Ofttime I have heard speak of your beaultie,
Your wit, wisdom, and your great courtesie:
Your great vertue ere ever I you saw,
I cobet much you both to see and know:
I am right glad, my sweet Dioclesiane,
That wee two now are so secret alone.
I would have given within this year ago
Ten thousand pound for to have had it so:
And I am glad that now I may behold
The same thing that my heart alwayes would?
And I have caused your father for to send,
To that intent, and for that small end,
That I may have of your bodie solace,
And now since wee are here in secret place:
For without fault I say to you plainly
I have kept my clean virginittie
To you truely, untill this present houre,
Notwithstanding your father the Emperour
Hath married me, yet would I not consent
In that behalf to fulfill his intent,
But at all tymes have waited upon you,
Wherefoze of mee ye take your pleasure now,
And speak to me, and let us go to bed,
Since I my self now thereto have you led.
What ever shee said, what ever shee did or wrought,
For all her talk one word hee answerd nought.

Shee

The seven Sages.

Shee saying that, to him shee said againe;
O my sweet heart, and good Dioclesiane,
I swear you here by Peter and by Paul,
In your keeping you have my life and saul.
What is the cause to mee ye will not speak,
Shew mee of love some token I besek:
For (as yee know) I am a young Ladie,
And to perform your will am here readie:
So in her armes diverse times shee him kint,
Him to have kiss to his mouth made a mint.
Hee turnd his head, and would not thole her kisse.
In her own minde, quoth shee, what thing is this?
And to this man I profer my bodie,
And by no way hee will consent to mee.
Dioclesiane mine only love, shee said,
With that my love so firme is on you laid,
Why do yee this? to mee to bee unkind,
Knowing right well ye have mine heart and mind:
And there is none that may perceibe or see
What there is done into this house but wee:
Therefore grant mee the thing that I you craue,
And ye therefore my maiden-head to have.
Hee wryed his face away, and his visage:
For by no way hee lyked her language.
Perceiuing then that shee could not obtaine
His love nor favour, but it denyed clean,
Shee said, O my love, and sweet Dioclesiane,
Behold my paps, behold my white brest bane,
Which here I put in your will and pleasure,
And clean forsaake your father the Emperour,

The seven Sages.

For why? he is both feeble, weak, and old,
Leane of body, and also of nature cold:
In his youth, head so valiant hee hath bene,
That now in age hee is consumed cleane:
What hee scarcely may stand upon his fate,
Wherefore to mee now such hee is not mete.
At your pleasure my bodie therefore take:
Hee feeling this his head hee turned back,
That by no signe nor other countenance
Into no sort hee wold do her pleasure:
But in so far as hee could him remove,
Hee might perceiue that shee wanted his love.
Quoth shee againe, if it pleases you nought
To speak to mee, nor yet shew mee your thought,
As may perchance be done for some good why,
Into that case excuse you well will I.
Yet not the lesse I wold yee did endite
Upon Paper, and your minde to mee write:
Yee please not speak, take there paper and ink,
Beseeching you to write mee what yee think.
If afterward your love I may obtaine,
In secret wise that none wot what wee meane:
So the paper and ink hee did receiue,
And write as after heere you may perceiue.
O Ladie fair, I pray God mee defend
From such mischance as I see you intend:
If I defile my fathers owne Orchard,
My fathers ire I get for my reward:
Nor I wot not what fruit thereof shall spring,
And also right well I know another thing,

That

The seven Sages.

That Gods wrath but faile shall fall on mee,
Therefore at short let all such folly bee:
Provoke mee not no further hitherto,
For I will shew the matter if yee do.

As soone as shee the Cedul had outread,
Under her feet incontinent it tread:
And then againe with her teeth shee it rabe
Whereof the text, that no man should perceiue.
All her head-gear shee did cast on the flure,
Rabe down her clothes, and all her rich besture,
Rabe down her hair, and skarted her visage,
While blood ran down o'r all her personage,
That all might hear shee cride with a loude voice,
Fly help for shame, or I my self will losse:
This rude Rybald would ravish mee with shame,
Perceiue this child now if hee serbeth blame.
Was neuer woman since first the world began
So cruelly drest with an unfaithfull man:
That I liued none harme should to mee done,
O ye my Lords, come heere, and help mee soone.

MORALITAS.

NOW by this tale yee may perceiue
How many wayes that women have
At all tymes for to deceiue an innocent
Into her net while shee him get, to her intent:

While flattring words both false and fair,
Such to rehearse would file the air,
For shame nor sin they will not spare their minde to show
Shame is past the shed of their hair, as well we know.

The seven Sages.

To tempt this man was all her minde,
And cause him to foule sin bee inclinde,
Hee would not speak but with a synd hee would forsake her,
Shee was the devils wonder kynd, the toule ill take her.

Shee lightlyed her owne Lord and King,
With great deceat and false taking:
Incontinent the child to bring to a mischief,
Fy traitour that thought such a thing, fy common thief.

Paper and ink shee till him gave,
Though hee was dumb, that shee might have
His utter minde, and to perceive what hee would do,
When shee it read with feet it read: Now fy, quoth shee.

When that shee saw shee could not speed,
Shee rave her clothes all into scried,
With skirting cause her face to bleed in great despite,
Fy trumpour that did such a deed, God will thee quite.

When shee had all reaven down her face,
Shee cryde oft times full loude a lace,
Is there none help in all this place nor no remead?
This traitor strong go soon cause hang, while hee bee dead.

Hee would heere in great villanie
Contrare my will deforced mee,
As yee may well perceive and see my bloodie face
Bears witnes well if such thing bee into this case.

Yee may perceive shee had no shame,
To cause her self get such defame:
Likewise an innocent bure blame that was so clean,
That tooke no cure to bee a whore, and shee a Queen.

Then into evill so well expert,
So falsely could the tale pervert,

Which

The seven Sages.

Which was well known soon afterward, as yee shall hear
What was both Queen, and child's part shall bee made clear.

O dooblic dragon, and doubtfome den!
O glowing, greedie, and gaping glen!
O filthie flesh fostered in fen, with great offence!
O Cocatrice that would not know thine owne consciencce.

O vile Viper most venomous!
O subtille Serpent sulphur ous!
O hideous pit pestiferous: now this I say thee,
O double devill most dangerous, God save me: from thee.

In malice thou art so frequent,
So many evils thou can invent:
So vicious, and so vehement, ay prone to evil,
Thou would run to get thine intent quick to the divell;

Fy on the foule flame fire so fell,
Fy on the hideous hound of hell,
From the very springing Well that ay was broken;
Thou cares not to condemne thy sell thy lust to slocken.

Fy on thy lust insatiable,
Fy on thy mirth most miserable:
Fie on thy love most lamentable, full of despise,
Your chance is ay so changeable; cleane I you quite.

Sith I you see so inconstant,
All vertues mee think yee want:
But into vice so aboundant yee are profest,
And ay to run to sin and shame you think it best.

Since yee are given to your pleasure,
Not regarding your owne honour:
How shall men have to you favour, therefore I quite you:
Yee are not worth to bee set foorth, the divoill bedryte you.

The seven Sages.

To good women not this I say,
It is their part both night and day,
As yee have heard before mee say, with them to chide,
To this good women will not say nay, no time nor tide.

Therefore I pray you mee excuse,
For evill women I will not ruse,
Their own honour so they abuse in everie sort,
Heerefore their companie I refuse, I say at short.

How the Empresse complained to the
Emperour of the shame done to her
by his son *Dioclesiane*.

THE Emperour with his Lords in the hall
Heard the loud shout and sozie piteous call,
Of the Empresse all hastily they forth ran,
Many great Lord, knight and Gentleman.
The Emperour came first where was the Queene,
And said, Madaine. what have yee heard or scene:
To do you noy, anguish, or great displeasure.
As shee said, here is a great traitour,
Yee call your son, but your son hee is nought,
Had he been yours such things he had not wrought:
I wot it was never heard of beforen,
In all this world since any man was bozn,
What such a knave so hie thing should presume,
As to defile the great Empresse of Rome.
Wherefore my Lord since yee are Emperour,
This matter must tend to your great dishonour,
Correct yee not such thing, and make remead,
I care nothing how soone that I be dead,

The seven Sages.

For good causes to chamber I him led,
Then like a knave hee would defile my bed:
I cherisht him with words of great comfort,
To speak to mee I did him oft exhort:
On fowle batworie his minde was only set:
As soon hee saw his will hee could not get,
At his pleasure hee made him mee de force,
Contrare my will, and so hath rent my corse,
With effusion of blood all abundant,
And believing none other thing instant
But hastie dead, were not I gave a shout,
Consider well if I stood then in doubt.
You may perceiue by mine abuilliment
The truth hereof how that hee hath it rent,
The shame and sin of this barlot too see
Each man may know how hee hath done to mee.
Therefore, my Lord, as I have said before,
If you desire you would cause to restore
My great honour, and my worship againe,
That this Rebald, false Dioclesiane
Would from mee rent forcibly against my will,
Else your bed I shall never come till.
When that the King this matter heard and saw,
Hee was inflamde with cruell ire and gaw.
Malice, woodnesse, and great melancholie,
Was no remead but that his son should die:
Called Sergeants, and gave them strait command
On a gallous they should him hang fra hand.
Then said the Lords that stood the Emperour near,
And please your Grace some of our words to hear.

Lord

The Ieuen Sages.

Lord, as yee know, yee have no sons but one,
Wheresore we will have great cause to make mone
And if yee had, wee think all verily
Pour pleasant son were able for to die:
But not the lesse with so haste intent,
Wee think not best. wee say with one consent,
Pour only son that yee so soone put downe,
Without order of Law or prohibition.
The law is made to punish trespassers,
All giben to evill, and malignant transgressors:
And if so bee that hee bee found the same,
Then by order let the law him-condemne:
What no man say, that the great Emperour
His only son in madnesse and furour
Without the Law hath put his son to dead,
Please your Grace to this matter to take head.
The Emperour to such words gave audience,
And said, My Lords of mee yee have credence,
Within this realme to leave iustice and law,
Wheresore I will consent well to your law:
And als I think it right expedient
Hee bee condemned in a plain judgement.
Then command was to put him in prison,
There to remaine without any ransom.
Unto the time that iustice Court should stand.
When foure Taylers received him fra hand,
In da pe prison right sharply him inclo de,
Wherein befoze the child was never afde,
Now let him sit, God cover him of care,
Of the Emperesse let us speak furthermare,

wa ho

The seven Sages.

Who perseverd in malice and great ire
Against this child as any burning fire.
As soone as shee had gotten true knowledge,
That this young child was put in prisonage,
Not put to dead so suddenly as shee would,
Shee cryed, shouted, and mourned manifold,
That all the palace shee could bee on steepe,
It was great paine her soz to see and heare.
Then her Ladies to the chamber thought best
Her to conuoy, therein soz to take rest.
When night was come the King to chamber past,
And found his Quene mourning and weeping fast,
Wringing her hands, sobbing and sighing sore,
The King noyde to see her make such a care:
To whom hee said, O my dear Ladie gent!
What is the cause that yee so sore lament?
Shee said, my Lord, yee know not all my case,
How your curst son hath made bloodie my face,
And would mee put to utter displeasure,
Where not your self, and other made succour:
Yee commanded him to bee hangde fra hand,
Yet not the lesse on life hee is liuand,
For your command is not obeyde at all,
For yet my shame no way is made to fall.
Wherefore my Lord, I thinke that yee stand a w,
Upon your son to lead iustice and law.
Then to the Quene the Emperour can say,
Hear me, so soone the morne as it is day,
All your desire to fulfill and intent
Hee shall but doubt thole iustice and iudgement.

Quoth

The seven Sages.

Quoth thee, my Lord, shall bee yet liue so lang,
Quoth hee, Madame, let this one night ob'rgang,
Then might such chance on you come hastily
As on a Burgesse came of this citie,
As it was sholwn the truth unto my sell.
Quoth hee, Madame, I pray you that to tell.
At your pleasure, quoth thee, it shall bee done,
So her Sermon on this wise began soone.

MORALITAS.

YEE see this Queene by wayes wrong,
Willing put down this proper child
By curst conceate and leasing strong,
To death him to convict and file:
And als her King perswade to throw all that shee said,
With many wrink, false wry, and wile,
But yet shee was set by her stile, by good counsell hee had.

Which causde him to prolong the time
By counsell unto the morne:
Where they best could tarie out the crime,
And cleane the chaffe out from the corne:
It is good to put by an evill houre, say I,
Ere an innocent bee forlorn:
And he of so great linage born, this is the cause and why.

For if this Queene had gotten her will
The King had repented it laire,
Without counsell or good skill
For to destroy his son and haire:
Which great had beene;
While the truth had beene scene,
A vengeance on her evermare,
This child that caryed in such care, And curst be such a Queen.

When

The seven Sages.

When thou young man comes to good age,
If any time it chanceth thee,
By gift of God wit or knowledge,
A chosen Iudge then for to bee
If any fault bee done, cause to correct it soone;
But first that thou both hear and see
The talking of the next partie, then thou thy wit adioyne.

If there occure cause or quarrel,
Bee not too swift to give sentence,
For therein stands right great perril,
Doubt; and danger with negligence:
Bee the matter obscure, Then thou should bee right sure,
By witnesse and experience,
Let each one use their due defence, even to rich as poor.

See thou use ay good counsell,
Of that bee sicker at thy side:
And so lightly thou shalt not faile,
VVhat ever chance for to betide:
Good counsell is the ground; where faithfulnessse is found,
It can perceive, and all provide,
And from all peril for to guide, within a little sound.

For if thou hastily pronounce
Sentence too soone to rich and poor:
The same no wise thou may renounce,
Nor in no sort againe reure:
Withoutten lack or shame, dishonour and defour;
Therefore thou should bee wonder sure,
That thou to no man do injure, or else thou servest blame.

Now to you Iudges I will say,
Eschew from wrath and great favour:
Let mercie mease your minde alway,
Let reason rule your great rancour.

The seven Sages.

In no point bee partial,
Your ballance beare equall,
Then do yee God a good pleasure;
And to your self purchase honour,
And wins good of all.

To know what the Emperour, the Em-
presse, and the young Child, and
the seven Doctors do signifie.

ERe wee proceed yet furt hermare,
Of this matter something will I shaw,
What each thing meanes for to declare
The matter better yee will know:
This Emperour that leades the Law,
Hee signifies a mans persoun,
That walters betwixt wind and waw,
Into this world ay up and down.

His Son betokens the Soul of man,
Which in the corps is ay inclosde:
The Empresse signifies sathan,
Who ever open malice musde:
The seven Doctors are seven vertues,
Fighting contrare seven deadly sins;
Which that the sillie Soul persues,
When destruction it begins.

The seven dayes this child is dumbe,
Of mans life they are the space:
For in this world fra hee first come
Hee never hath perfect solace.

While

The seven Sages.

While that God take him in his grace,
And forget all this worldly lust;
Then speakes hee to God face to face,
When that the diuell hee hath vincust.

Even so is of this Empresse tale,
Told for to tempt the Emperour,
Trowing perfectly to prevaile,
And of this child to bee victour,
Tels on this tale for his pleasure,
Of which the Emperour was content,
As yee shall heare, good auditour,
Therefore to purpose let us went.

The first tale of the Empresse, is of the good
Tree that grew in the Burgesse garden,
who for the Impe that grew beside it, cau-
sed cut the great tree.

In Romes towne remaind a rich Burgesse,
Which had at wealth all mirth and merrinesse,
With fair biggings which were both broad and hig
With gay gardens that were pleasant to see;
Of everie flowre hee had therein a part,
That was to get about in everie art.
To tell their names I need not now take tyme,
Few was such like so pleasant in all Rome.
In this garden there grew a noble tree,
Which everie year brought forth fruit good plenty
Then by all this the fruit that on it grew

The seven Sages.

Was so done sweet, and of so great vertue,
What man that had any loze maladie,
As is leper, exerce, or popleries
So soon as hee of this fruit got a taste,
Of all sicknesse hee would bee whole in haste.
And so it chaunced upon an holie day
This Burgesse went to his Garden to say
His orisons, and beholding this tree,
A gay young impe behind it quyetlie
Hee saw growing, which was proper and fair,
Incontinent hee called the Gardener:
And said, Good friend, see ye be wonderfure,
And of this impe daylie that ye take cure:
For I belieue to have a better tree
Of this young plant, and better be such thee
For is this old, which I can not aduance,
That pith inlakes sap, sapor, and substances
Howbeit this tree be far grown it aboue.
The Gardener said, Paster, it shall be done.
Within few dayes to shew thee for certaine
To see this plant the Burgesse came againe,
Which as hee thought was not half so pleasant,
As it was when the first day hee it saw.
To the Gardener hee said, How can this be
My tender plant appeareth not to mee
Half so pleasant, as it was the last day.
Hee said Paster, Now tent take what I say,
No wonder is, this old tree is far maiore,
And from the young takes all substance and aire,
By the reason the branches are so brade,

The Seven Sages.

So the young plant is so unlikely made:
For if this plant got the substance and aire,
That this tree gets, with speed it would grow maie
For is the old, for age almost is dead.

The Burgesse said, I know thereof remead:
Cut down the boughes and branches of the old.
Quoth hee, Master, I shall do as ye told:
And so hee did, then after in short space
To see the plant againe came the Burges,
And saw right well that the same tender plant
Some needfull thing it did inlack and want.

To the Gardener hee said, How chanceth this?
My tender plant it do mislike I with:
Shew mee thereof the cause without leasing.
Hee said, Master, I suppose of one thing,
That is the height of this high growing tree
Away the Sun it holds, as thinketh mee,
Which giveth life, and nourishing but doubt
To every thing that ever grew thereout:
And also the rain it may not come it near,
Which nourisheth also some time of the year,
These two wanting, there is no tree can thrive.

The Burgesse said, That shall wee mend belive,
Cut the old clean, and quite down by the root,
For I suppose wee shall get better fruit
Of this young tree, nor of the old was bad.

The Gardener did as his Master him bade,
Cutted the old, and let the young stand till,
So hee obey'd his Masters minde and will.
After short time, as this was done and wrought,

Both

The seven Sages.

Both old and young perishe, and came to nought :
Wherefore great harm and dule came to the poore,
For who was sick of their health they were sure,
Having recourse unto that noble tree:
Which to cut down it was a great pittie.
And when the poore perceiv'd it was cut down,
They curst and warped with many malisoun,
That any wise thereto gave their counsell,
Or helpt thereto, they quite condemn'd to hell:
As why? the poore of all infirmities
Were ay well cured of all maladies.
Quoth she, My Lord, now have ye understand
What I have said, quoth hee, that I warrand.
Quoth she, the like thereof I shall declare
The which pertaines to your unlesse heire.

The declaration of this tale told by the Emperesse.

This old tree is your owne noble person,
That with counsell of your Lordes of renown:
The poore and sick do ay he'p and supplie
By your Justice and great Nobilitie.
This young plant is your own unbzittie heire,
You to destroy hee calls him evermaile:
By his cunning growing up grea by grea,
As did the Jape behind the mackle tree:
And so to cause to cut the branches down,
Who are your Lordes next to your owne person,
That hee may teigne, and sit upon your chyre,

This

The seven Sages.

This is his minde that hee doth most desire:
Of this matter then what shall after fall,
All folk shall mourn lament, weep, howt and call,
And wavis them that cutted down the tre,
Where that they went to get help and supplie:
O; gave counsell this young Empe for to nourish,
But it destroy, o; it bare fruit o; flourish:
My counsell is therefore the Empe cut down,
Since yet your self reignes in your hie renown:
And suffer not the young Empe for to grow,
For hee shall do dayly what ever hee dow,
You to destroy and your bodie put down,
And purchase not the maledictionn
Of the poore folk, to whom ye were safegard,
Therefore in haste take your Son forth in ward,
And but delay on gallous cause him hing,
Ye doing this, yee do like a wise King.
The Emperour said Madame, how by the reed
Your counsell is both wholesome, wise and good:
The moyn hee shall go to the death most bilde,
Howbeit hee be mine only gotten child.

The moyn then came, hee called the Lords all,
Together past unto his iustice hall:
The Emperour himself sate in judgement,
On pannell put his Son incontinent:
And so at short hee was condemn'd to deat,
To be hanged on gallous but remeand:
Which moztall sound then passing him beforen
Of Trumpet, shalme, and als of blowing hoyn,
As the use was when any man should die,

Shout

The seven Sages.

Should bee convoyd with so great menstralls:
And as hee pass'd down through the great citie
The people mournd, saying it was great pittie,
The only son of the Emperour to hang,
Many mouened, many their hands they tozang.
In meane season as hee went through the strait,
His first Master Pancillas cou'd him mat.
The Master saw hee was so gallous led,
With speed of spures to the palace him sped:
To whom the child so soone as hee him saw,
Down with his head then hee inclyned law.
As hee would say, Master, if yee bee kinde,
Now in my need I pray of mee have minde:
For I am now without yee get merrie,
Condemned hereon the gallous to die.
Yee may well know then hee no tarie made,
But in all haste unto the Palace rade:
Yet not the lesse unto the Ministers,
Robests sergeants, saylers, and officers
Hee made request that they should haue nothing,
For hee belted to get grace from the King,
To save his life, hee shall not die this day,
Then were they glad, to yon the smith to say:
All in one voice the people had him haste,
So without bode hee rode as hee were chaste,
At the Palace hee lighted off his horse,
Who should him dight hee took but little force:
Of the Emperour helpe hee got presence,
To whom hee gabe on knees great reverence,
As him effeird, to whom the Emperour said,

Waters

The seven Sages.

Were not I will your reverence not degrade,
Yee and the rest right soze would punisht be,
For your reward yee serbe no more of mee.
Hae said My Lord, and please your noble Grace,
When have I spent right ill my seven years space,
Taking labours on your Son day and night,
In good doctrine him teaching as I might:
Yet our labours at all wee not regard,
But beliebe well to get better reward.
The Emperours said: Thou liest Doctor but doubt,
First unto mee, then to the rest about.
Mine only son well speaking, whole and sere
I delvberd, Now yee have brought him herte
With no manners, but doyled, daff, and dumbe:
And moze attour, to shew thee all and summe:
Thogh he be dumb, such thing may come on chance
By God his will, or by good ordinance.
But by all this hee purposde which was worse,
Mine owne Ladie on maisterie to desoyce:
And all her face with her rich ornament
In great malice hee hath all reaven and rent:
Wherefoze this day hee shall not faile to die,
And after him thou and thy companie.
The Master said, with words mille and mek,
As for your son yee say that cannot speak,
The Lord of all that matter well hee knowes,
As yee shall know hee is not dumb but cause.
I trust in God the suth you soz to say,
A thousand him shall hear speak on a day.
As for your wife, my Lord, where yee alledge,

Where

The seven Sages.

Where that hee would haue done to her outrage:
 On truth my Lord, I shall you shew but waite
 In companie with us this many yere,
 As is well known continually hath bene;
 Such thing of him was neuer heard nor scene?
 Therefore, good Lord for your great reverence,
 To such wide salues giue not too soone credence:
 For if you cause your only Son to die,
 For the false words of your wiues banitie,
 On chance it shall far worse to happen you,
 For to a Knight whereof I shall tell you,
 That for the words of his vain wanton wife
 Canste him bereave his gray bound of his life,
 Which sa'd his son from slaughter of the serpent.
 Then said the King, Tell mee sooth that legent.
 Pantillas said to him, My Soberaigne,
 If I so did then were my tale in vaine.
 For ere my tale were all complet but doubt,
 Of your own son the life may bee put out:
 And then my tale for nothing it were told,
 But if your Grace of your great mercie would
 Retire your Son from the gallous againe,
 Then woul'd I think my tale were not in vaine.
 Therefore if that your Grace pleaseth to hear,
 Zee cause your son while the moorn to retire.
 That being done, when it is moorn you may
 Do your intent when it is fair light day.
 The Emperour then shortly to conclude
 With heable minde this talk well understood:
 And canste the child for to bee cald againe,

Until

The seven Sages.

Untill the morn in prison to remain.
Then this Doctor right pleasant y began
To tell this tale but to one any man.

MORALITAS.

I Can not say but nay of this Burgesse,
For to a flay alway for greedinesse,
To cut this tree, would bee of such riches,
I say for mee that hee proved foolishnesse:
And als was not wytelesse,
Both tree and fruit hee wanted:
The Gardner not sakelesse,
To cut to soone hee granted.

It was ill done so soone to cut it down,
Though it abone conioyn, would not wel sown
VWith the young tree to bee at division,
I say for mee surely it was no reason:
I heard once such a lesson,
Better to have in hand
One only birds possession,
Than two in wood flecand.

A dog, I read indeed a collop staw,
Passing through Tweed with speed the shadow saw
That it was more larger the flesh let saw,
Of it was clear even there of flesh and aw:
They use in house and haw, what ever dinner cost,
Let beef not from you draw while that yee get the ro.

If this Burgesse that case had well for scene,
Such greedinesse doubtlesse then had not beene:
That noble tree so free, so fresh and green,
So soone to bee shortly down cutted cleane:
Great covetise I meane,
Of this was all the cause,
As hath beene read and seene
In old Doctors lawes.

Timoth.

The seven Sages.

Timoth. 6.

Cupiditas est radix omnium malorum.

A reproach or reproofe to the Empresse.

Now thou thy tale hast told with thy false syrie lips,
But not gotten thou would light skirt for all thy skips
Had I thee in my grips, on thee I should bee wroken,
The heat into thy hips the salt sea will not stoken:
Thou art a baird full broken, a hideous hels bird,
Better thou had not spoken, condemned devils bird.



The tale of Pantillas the first Doctour.

In to a realme there dwelt a balliant knight,
Of noble fame, of great riches and might,
That had one son my Lord, now as ye have,
To three purses to foster him hee gave:
The first purse for to give him suck and feed,
The next him wash, and keep him clean at need:
The third to bring him into sleep and rest,
The noble knight for his Child thought it best.
The knight also hee had a gay Greyhound,
That none moze swift did run upon the ground:
Also hee had a Falcon fair of flight,
Right swift of wing when hee lyked to light.

These

The seven Sages. 117

These two the knight loved above measure,
Because oft times they did him great pleasure.
This Greyhound was so swift, and of such speed,
When he was loof his prey hee causede ay bleed,
And this same prey brought to his laze anon,
This was one cause hee loved him alone:
Also when that this knight went to battell,
If that his chance that time would not prevaile,
Into his mouth his hoves taile would not take,
About his lugs oft times hee would it shake,
Then yowl and cry, as hee would quite run wood,
So by that signe the knight well understood,
If at that tyme hee would further or no,
And so oft times let him to battell go:
His Hauk also was so fierce in her sight,
So swift in wing, and als so wonder wight,
That hee was never cast off to say,
But without fault shee byroked ay her prey.
These were causes his Hound and Hauk hee loved,
Because to mirth they raised him oft and moved:
Also this knight kept all his whole intent
In hoves running, jussing and toznamen:
So on a day hee causede to proclame
At his Castle for setting forth his game,
Who would come there to tourney or jussing,
Breaking of spears, and als of hoves running,
At the set day to be matcht should not faile,
This was the cry, and so to short my tale.
The knight himself first entered in the field
To the toznay with harnesse, hoves, and shield.

When

The seven Sages.

Then after him past his fair Ladie gent,
 With her Ladies to see the toynament:
 Then after that past all the flourishes thre,
 The toynament for to behold and see,
 Locking the dore, leaving the child alone,
 Trusting this man's entrie should bee none.
 While the tozney and iusting should bee done,
 Then in all haste they should return right soone;
 Believing well the bairns not to wake,
 None being there but the Hound and the Hawk:
 And the young Child that in the cradle lay,
 Except these two, the rest were past away.
 Then no man knew lay lurking in the haw
 A great Serpent, before no man did know,
 When shes perceiv'd the house so desolate,
 And none therein that durst with her debate:
 Out of her hole some shes put forth her head,
 At this Infant having a cruell dread,
 Who lay sleeping in the cradle alone,
 Him to destroy at short so to shes gone:
 The Falcon this beholding where shes late,
 Upon her Berk to do shes wist not what,
 But with her wings shes rustled and rang her bels,
 Almost shes had all shaken them in shels:
 So with the may's and beir which made the Hake,
 The good Hound rose, and off his flap did wake:
 And when hee saw that the Serpent did creep
 Towards the Cradle where the child did sleep,
 With a fell saie on the Serpent hee ran,
 And so at short these two to fight began.

The seven Sages.

So cruelly, that it was great marvell,
Which of the two at that time should prevaile:
Due to deboure, the other to defend,
These two at length together did contend:
So long at length these two together fight,
Almost the Hound all quits had lost his might:
So cruelly hee was wounded in blood,
That all about where that the cradle stood
Was blood berun, that marvell was to see
Betwixt these two so bold bargane to bee.
The Greyhound then perceiuing his owne blood,
Into his heart warrt so cruell and wood,
With a fell faired upon the Serpent ran,
So them betwixt a new bargane began,
With such malice, melancholy and ire,
While one was dead, that none of them would tire,
Nor leaue the field while it chanc'd at the last,
Betwixt them two the cradle o'r they cast:
With bottome up, and on the tores it stood,
Where it was all about berun with blood:
So it became, and fell by God his grace,
That the foure tores saved the child his face,
And Axped still with visage toward the ground,
These two fighting the Serpent and the Hound,
While at the last the Hound into certaine
This fell Serpent hee hath overcome and Raine,
And sav'd this Child from perill in that tide,
When all was done, down by the cradle side,
Licking his wounds lay downe this noble Hound,
For fighting sope, and so on sleep fell sound.

Beside

The seven Sages.

Beside this child which in the cradle lay,
Done in the house but only the same tway:
The Babe sleeping, and knew no kind of ill,
The hound wearie, and soughten for th his fill:
The serpent slaine, as I said you befoze,
The Babie safe, and the hound wounded soze.
And so anone after this toznamenit,
Each man and woman to their ludging went,
To tell that day who wan the enterpise
That erand now to my matter not lyes:
Therefore as now that thing I will let bee,
And let us speak of the Pourishes thre,
Who first came home, and entered in the haw,
So soone as they the blood and cradle saw,
Rising their hands, and rying down their hait
Crying alas, too on us ebermaire,
Our only child, our babe, and foster bairn
Is quite devourd with a dog, and fozesairn.
Alas for we, alas what shall wee do,
Wee know no place for succour to run to,
If our Master perchance us apprehend,
There is no way from his hand us defend,
But alwayes shall on us come sudden dead,
Wee know no way where wee may find remead.
Hinke so is come, let us in haste ail thre
To save our life but stay, away to flee:
Even so they did, but left the house alone,
But moze counsell, all thre away are gone,
And had no wit noz wisdoms in their head.
To see whether the bairn was quick or dead.

The seven Sages.

For left the cradle, and to perceive the case,
But ran away all thée crying alace:
And as that they were passing south the street,
Their own Mistresse they chanced for to meet,
With her Ladies coming from the tourney:
Shee perceiving her Purples in the way,
Right soze mourning, and rybing down her haire,
All too begun, repleat of sturt and care,
Soon she inquirde at them, How stands the case?
They answerd her a thousand times alace,
What shall wee say? for words to multiplye,
There is no bute, all men the case may see:
A devil, Madame, into a dogs skin
Hath slain your son alone your hall within:
In the which dog my Lord had most delite,
But now he hath of your son made you quite,
In token yet where that the cradle stood
The dog sleepes still now bathed in his blood.
Hee was the dog that my Lord loved best,
Hee was no dog but with a devil possess:
Therefore, Ladie, for us is no remead,
But either flee, or else to hide the dead.
Therefore, Madame, of us ye have mercie,
This is the cause that causeth us to flee.
This shee hearing, anone fell to the ground,
Without moze space into a deadly sound:
And at last Ladies caused her awake,
Held up her head, while shee began to talk,
And said, Alace, My dear son art thou slain?
Shall thou never play on my knee again?

¶

shall

The seven Sages.

Shall I neuer with my pape see thee play,
Alas how soon art thou so went away:
Shall I neuer thee laughing on mee see?
Alas, how is this dolour chanced mee?
Wherein I had mine only most pleasour,
Except my Lord, both by tide, time, and houre,
Is now but doubt with a dog clean debourd,
And neuer again to the life hee restord:
What shall I say? This is a carefull case,
Mine only son is dead, and gone alace:
So the mourning in great dolour and wo,
The people about that seeing did right so,
Mourned right sore, and of her had pittie,
In such dolour that Lacie for to see.
In the mean time the knight from his Loznap
Retired home, and so saw by the way
His own Lacie lamenting in dolour,
Requie the cause of all her displeasour.
She saith, My Lord, alace and evermore,
I can not speak for great dolour and care
Is hapned us, a wonder cruell case,
Your son is slain for evermore alace,
With your grethound whom that so well ye lov'd,
Now all that love on your son hee hath prov'd:
Hee hath him slain in cradle where hee lay,
Your nourishes all three are fled away:
And yet the place where that the cradle stood,
Your hound lyeth sleeping in your sons blood:
This your Grethound without any help mo,
Your only childe all quite hath tane you fro

Where

The seven Sages.

Wherefoze my self unto the houre I die
Shall nebeate while I rebenged bee
Upon your hound, which hath my one son slain,
For in your bed shall never come again,
While hee bee dead, that causde my one son die.
But wo, alas, this is no mends to me:
Howbeit it bee a sythment to my heart,
Yet my great wo it flockins in some part.
Wherefoze, my Lord, if ye think it bee done,
Without delay cause slay your Grewhound soon.
The Knight hearing her sorrowfull tythance,
How to his son had fallen such mischance,
Homeward in haste but bode hee made him bowen,
And in the cloffe when hee was lighted down,
The Grewhound heard hoysmen into the cloice,
Amongst the rest hee heard his Masters voice,
And up hee rose in the blond where hee lay,
To his Master the hie gate came his way,
Faint and soze fought, came sawning to his feet,
As hee was wont his Master for to meet:
Into great ire, what is there moze to say?
With his sharp sword he clobe his head in tway,
And that only for one word of his wife,
Got his reward that saved his sons life.
Then past the Knight but bode into the haw,
Perceiv'd the blood, and als the cradle saw:
Hee lifted up the cradle as it stood,
Found the childe whole, and also much spilt blood,
Perceiuing then of the Serpent the head,
The skin and tail that had soughten to dead:

The seven Sages.

And found his son withoutten want or wound:
Alas; hee said, for my good gay Grewhound,
That I have slain withoutten any cause,
But only for the bold vain wordes and sawes
Of a woman, that hath talked in vain,
Wherthow I have but cause my Grewhound slain
Which I perceiue hath saved my sons life
From the Serpent, though his debate and strife.
Who to the houre that now I drew a sword,
Who to the ear that heard my wifes word:
Who to the hand that sudden stroke that gave
To my best hound; that my sons life did save,
Which I lov'd best without any compaire,
Except my wife, my only son and heire,
Which at this time hee saved from the dead,
And for reward now hee hath lost his head,
But doubt I would have given a thousand pound
Of good money, ere I had slain my hound.
But since so is, I see is no remead,
My son is safe, and my good hound is dead,
That fought for him, and only sav'd his life,
And I him slew through one word of my wife:
But this time forth here I solemn a vow,
That ilk man shall give credence to and trow,
Here I forsake all Toynay and Josting,
Here I forsake all balking and hunting:
Here I forsake running with shield and speir,
Here I forsake all fates of men of weir
In Christendome, but yet no manlinesse,
Here I forsake all armour and harnesse:

The seven Sages.

For I will passe now to the holy Land,
And fight with Jewes while I may strike or stand:
Contrare Gods foes, and thereto end my life,
This bowed this knight for one word of his wife,
That unto her gabe such hastie credence,
Without a cause or yet experience:
Therefore, my Lord, your good grace I require,
Gibe not so soon credence to the desire
Of your Emperesse, though she bee diligent,
Against your son great leasings to invent:
For yee may well by this same tale perceave,
What the knight got that so soon credence gabe
Unto his wife, and unto her words vain,
That sav'd his son that same bound hath he gain.
Therefore, good Sir, and please your noble grace,
I would you gabe no credence in this case
Unto your Quēen, to put your son to dead,
For yee will rewe when there is no remead,
As did this knight, his noble bound that flew,
Remead bypast then he began to rewe.
My Lord, hee said, have yee betane this tale.
The Emperour said, that had done but fail:
For that good tale that yee have told to mee,
As for this day my son hee shall not die.
The Doctor said, if that yee do such thing,
Yee do wisely, and like a noble king:
Thanking your Grace that only for my sake,
Your sons dead only yee have done to sake,
And so took leave at the good Emperour,
To his marrowes past home with all pleasure.

MOR.

The seven Sages.

MORALITAS.

THis tale tels us, who list thereto take tent,
That Nourishes should not bee negligent:
To keep their babies who can not keep their sell
From fire, water, and all such like perrell
That may happen to any innocent.

For into truth my self this matter saw
In Edinburgh town west underneath the waw:
Therefore more sure the matter ye shall trow,
That an infant was swallowed with a Sow,
The guts rave foorth, both lung, liver, and gaw.

The mother left the young one on the flure,
In blankets sit, which child her own self bure:
Past her way foorth, and ere she came again
The greedie Sow had this young babe slaine
This my self saw, I may say it more sure.

Though I not saw, the other I heard tell,
How a woman past foorth but to the Well,
And left her babe in the cradle sleeping.
Ere shee returnd the house was all burning,
And the young babe devourd with fire so fell.

Many mischiefs and also great offence
Hath oft occurrd by nurses negligence,
That their babies leaves in the house alane,
Which is the cause of many bairnes bane,
As is oft seen by good experience.

Therefore mothers and nurses I protest,
When that you put your young babies to rest,
Leave not the house alone all desolate:
What may bechance oftimes right small yee wate,
To eshew danger do yee the likeliest,

Als

The seven Sages.

Als in this tale I finde another thing,
How the Serpent lay in a hole lurking:
Waiting while that the house was at quiet,
Many servants now privily playes the Pyat,
Much taking out, and small good will in bring.

These to Serpents right well I may compaire,
From their masters ay taking late and aire:
As beif, bacon, malt, meal, both cloth and coals,
Taking ay out, and hiding into hoals,
These are serpents to you I say but maire.

As to this Knight which his good hound hath slain,
That sav'd his son from all perrill and pain:
Yee may perceive by good experiente,
It is not good to give hastie credence,
Unto wives words that are both false and vain.

Untill the time they had perfectly seen,
How the whole cause and matter it had been:
When they had known the utter veritie,
Then had been time the dog to have caus'd die,
Also the Nurse no way I can make clean.

Then through the word of a vain wicked wife,
Which oft is cause of meekell sturt and strife,
Causde him to do the thing hee did sore rew,
Because the truth that time hee clean misknew,
And causde him reave from his good hound the life.

Which instantly for look all running of speir,
All merrinesse, and honest fates of weir:
All valiant acts of justing and tornay,
Hunting, halting, and all such game and play,
His own realm for evermore forbear.

Yee married men, take here experience,
And siklike as persfite intelligence,

The seven Sages.

From hastie words of your wite till eschew,
For they will say, and cause you traistly trow,
Which is not worth a shell full of credence,

O wicked wight, thou does all that thou can,
With false ingine ever to tempt the man:
When most hee makes himself for to destroy,
Then art thou glad, then makes thou mirth and joy.
Wo with thy wit, thy bones hee may fore ban.

Waried woman that ay casts thine ingine,
Thine own marrow ever to put to pine,
So thou obtaine thy soul lust and pleasour,
Not regarding no way thine own honour,
Which thou not cares for an old trump to tine.

Curst creature, and also shamelesse seed,
An honest turn I can not of thee read,
Excepting one that bure the blesfull birth,
Which with his blood brought us all to great mirth,
To pray to him doubtlesse thou hast great need.

A laud and praise to the Doctor,
that put off the first day by his
tale told to the Emperour.

O Panitillas, with thy sweet suggered tongue,
Which in great realms & kingriks hath been rung;
And now at late to this good Emperour,
Which sweet sentence thou hast both said and sung,
And from all doubt and danger down hast dung
The Emperours great and ringing fierce furour,
Wherethrough thou hast procured some succour,
Vnto this childe on gallows should be bung,
Had thou not been, God thanke thee good Doctor.

The

The seven Sages.

The second tale of the Emperesse.

The Emperesse word past incontinent,
That the Kings son had not tholed judgement,
When shee that heard, but farrie shee fell down,
For hurt and noy into a deadly swoon:
Whereof word came unto the Emperour,
That his Ladie had tane such displeasure:
And so axone fast thither hee him sped,
Found her right soze mourning into her bed.
So hee enquirde at her what was the cause,
Shee said. My Lord, there is anew that knowes,
What earthly shame, despite, and displeasure
Done by your son, is to my dishonour:
Whereof I can by no way get remead,
And y^e promise this day hee should be dead.
But wo alas, I doubt right wonder soze,
It shall you chance as did an hirc and boze.
The Emperour said, Madame I you enquire
That tale to tell, for it is my desire,
To hear it told by you the suith I say,
Naoth shee, My Lord, I told one yester day,
Of it followd right small effect o; nane,
Whereeto should I another tell againe:
Howbeit thereto that y^e give great credence,
To set it forth y^e make right small defence:
Yet not the lesse at this time I will tell,
How with a Boze and Shepheard it befell.

Vpon a time there was an Emperour,
Of great wisdome, great puissance & honour:
And

The seven Sages.

A forrest fair hee had pleasant to see,
 Both gay and trim with many samely tree,
 Wherein there was running a great wild bair,
 Both day and night hee made therein repair:
 All kinde of folk that this boze might overtake,
 Without mercie hee did deuoure and sla.
 So that none durst out throught the forrest passe,
 For doubt of death the way so perillous was:
 Whereof the King was heauie in his minde,
 That his people was slain on such like kinde:
 With a dumb beast deuoured to the dead,
 And by no way thereof could get remead,
 In his empire a cry hee cause to proclame
 On his behalf authoritie and name:
 Who would debate or boldly take on hand
 With that bisme boze in battell for to stand;
 And him vanquish by strength of stalwart straike,
 His one daughter hee should haue to his maik,
 After his death, his realme as he were heir,
 This should hee haue whoeuer slew the bair.
 This was proclamed throught his kinrth and land,
 And none was found the deed would take in hand,
 Except an Heard that in himself took heed,
 Night 3 this boze quoth hee, bying to the dead:
 Not only I but all my kin also
 Should throught this deed bryng euer woolloly so:
 And euermore in estimation be,
 So I had hap to cause this dumbe beast die:
 Which I shall do, or else to lose my life,
 For I that boze we shall bee at the strife:

And

The seven Sages.

And so hee took his shepheards staffe in hand,
Went to the wood where hee the boze soon fand.
He may perceiue how soon the boze him saw,
Without delay toward the Herd did drave,
With such a faire, and als a felloun fear,
The sillie Herd durst neuer come him neare:
To save his life to see if hee had hap,
But more debate up in a tree hee lap.
Incontinent when hee that boze so saw,
The tree to bite began, and als to gnaw:
So that the Herd was soze feard in a part,
That the tree crop he should make turn downwart:
But yet the Herd bethought him on a wile,
How that he should this bold brim boze beguile:
It chanc'd so that this tree was laden full
Of noble fruit, which ay the Herd did pull,
Which hee cast down ay to the boze to eat,
Whereof the boze was glad that he got meat:
And fild him so, that hee list well to sleep,
The Herd that saw, and down the tree did creep:
By that an arm hee hang into the tree,
With that other the boze right quietly
Upon the womb right softly can hee clawe,
The boze sleeping, perceibed well and saw
At the tree root the boze where that hee lay,
With his braig knife his throt cutted in tway,
Then brought his head unto the Emperour,
With all gladnesse, triumph, and great honour:
Saying, good Sir, and please your noble grace,
Your great wild boze I have him kild thzogh care:

Not

The seven Sages.

Not doubting but your crye will fulfill,
You canst proclame with your counsell and will.
What e'er he was that would kill your wild Bair,
Hee would marrie your daughter and your air:
When all your court refused the same to do,
With a stout heart I set my minde thereto:
And now on case this same man chanc'd am I,
And I desire your Grace fulfill your cry.
The Emperour said, all that I canst proclame,
Compleit I not it is to my defame,
What should hee moze? there hee got to his wage,
The Emperours daughter, and realm in heritage,
When the Emperour pass from this mortall life,
The whole Empire hee bzuked and his wife:
And so the bird on womb hee clew the boze,
Wherethow hee got the kingdome obermanoe.
Quoth she, my Lord, have you not understand
What I have said? Quoth hee, I take in hand.
Quoth she, My Lord, yet then it were no skalth,
Though I you told the tale and sentence baith.

The declaration of this tale.

This mightie Boze betokens your person,
Whow whole great might, wit, wisdom & renown
This whole empire yee guide, and als defends,
And punisheth what person that offends.
This bird I may to your son well compare,
That would you slay, as the bird did the baire,
With his cunning doth claw you on the wame,
While that ye sleep, and then put you to shame:

The seven Sages.

O^r else you stay either by day o^r night:
This your son doth by his science and sight:
That he may buyk both your impire and crown,
He cares nothing what come to your person:
Even so his Masters with their false faigned lawes
Do you ay glose, as all the world well knowes:
Therefore, my Lord, as you will have welfair,
Remember well on the Shepheard and Bair.
Then said the King, God forbid that so bee,
That chanc'd the boie, that such thing chance to me:
But not the lesse, Madame for your good tale
My son the morn shall bee hanged but saile.
My Lord, said she, if ye complet that thing,
Then shall ye do like a wise noble King.

MORALITAS.

Courage provokes hardinesse,
Which two engenders strong manhead:
Which three adjoynd with happinesse,
Makes a man debate his plead:
Right so into this case this shepheard did purchase,
The faire maiden als sweet as meed,
With all her land, and gold so red, God granted him such grace.

Aventure good, and have ay good,
For debate makes destinie,
For even which this shepheard stood,
Either to do, or else to die:
Hee was so stout and sture, of his life took no cure,
Therefore would thou esteemed bee, set all on a venture,
And for to purchase honestie.

To dignitie would thou thee dresse,
And conquesse thee honour,

Thou

The seven Sages.

Thou should not sleep in idlenesse,

Nor take thy pleasure :

Set all on six or seven, and perchance cast eleven,
With prayer so and good labour

A man may conquesse heaven ,
Denuding thee of all rancour.

A reproach to the Empresse.

*The crooked comparisons of your wilde bair
Will win you no warifons to you I declare,
Of hell thou art the snare, Plutos play fool in plain,
In hell then hold thee there, and come not here again:
But still ay there remaine, to bee hung by the halfe
Into perpetuall pain, because thou art so false.*

THe morrow came, and but more abisement
The Emperour himself sat in iudgement;
Condemnd his son on gallous foze to die,
Without respect that alkin men might see:
Hee being led without the street and town,
With great regrait and lamentation.
The next Master came then the way ryding,
And saw the childe to the gallous ganging,
Whereat hee was both sad and sorrowfow,
But yet the childe to his Master did bow,
Inclinde his head, as hee would said him to,
Master, make speed, yee know what is ado.
The Master then picked so in that flour,
While hee lighted befoze the Emperour:
With reuerence as well could him effeir,
And at his Grace right humbly could hee speir.
O my good Lord, who gave you this counsell?

Without

The seven Sages.

Withoutten cause your own son down to quell,
Is this your wife that suchlike sars you do?
Perchance you shall upon worse hap come to:
Then chanced a knight y^e throw his wife fals sawes
Was put to shame without quarrell and cause.
Then said the king, Good master I require you,
Shew mee that tale, and gladly I shall hear you.
My Lord, hee sayes, Will yee cause call again
Your only son, who is to suffer pain,
I shall you tell my tale sw^orth to the end,
And so the king again for him did send:
Put him in ward where that he was beforⁿ,
While that the tale was done, and till the morn:
So the M^aster the second tale began
Before the king, and many noble man,
As yee shall hear, therefore give audience,
But moze delay, and to your reverence:

The tale of the second Master.

Iⁿ to a citie there was an ancient knight,
That had married a Ladie fair and bright,
As yee have one, my Lord to your pleasour,
And held her up in all ease and honour;
Lob'd her so well aboue all earthly thing,
Like as yee do your Qu^een, my soveraign king:
He lob'd her so, he could not eat nor drink
But her presence, so on her ay did think:
And als at night, when all folk to bed past,
The gates and doores also hee locked fast,
And all the keyes under his head they lay,

Cbe

The seven Sages.

Eberilk night while mozn that it was day:
And at ilk mozn when he thought time to rise,
Opened the doozs himself as was the guise,
In that cite was a custome and law
Cryed openly, that ilk person might knaw,
At a set houre a bell was rung at night,
That all might hear, and understand full right:
And thereafter withoutten more delay
The watch was set to walk while it was day:
Then after that, if they could any meet,
Going alone, or walking in the street,
Soon were they tane, and into prison led,
While on the mozn that all men rose from bed,
They were all bound to a stock or a tree,
To their great shame, that all the town might see:
Then after that, induring their life time,
They were repute as guiltie of a crime:
And holden forth from all good companie,
This was the law that time of this cite.
This foresaid knight whereof I spake befoze,
Was grown in age, an old man and an hoze:
His ramping race of youth he had complet,
And had slookned of bed solace the sweet:
Howbeit he lov'd his Ladie well enough,
Yet as ye know more graffth pertaines the plengh,
And shee perceiv'd of such craft hee did fall,
Shee took in hand another to assail:
And so shee did a man of tender age,
Into larks bouz for to win ballalage,
Who had a quyet chalmier in the town,

The seven Sages.

So every night after the knight lay down,
Under his head the key she stole away,
To her young love she went where that he lay:
And so she did as oft as ever she list,
Took sooth the keyes that her husband not wist:
And when she came from her tryll and her train,
Shee laid the keyes under his head again.
So it befell upon a winter night,
A waking came upon this eldren knight:
Hee could not sleepe, yet waking as hee lay,
Hee turnd about, and mist his wife away:
Upon her name he cryde often no; thise,
She answered not, then hee becomth to rise,
Sought all the house, by no wisse could hee find,
And wist not well if she was out or in,
Sought his bed-head where that the keyes lay,
What would ye moze? they are all tane away,
Past to the gates, all open them hee fand,
But moze advise hee closed them fra hand,
In a window that opened to the gate,
Much of the night there sat hee at the wait:
And when it was about the third Cock-crow,
Making her home, his own wife when hee saw,
Who found the doore upon her locked fast,
As may well wit that shee was then agast:
Nevertheless because the gates were locked,
For to win in peartly thereat shee knocked.
Then said the knight, O thou woman unclean,
Thinks thou honour on Eret now to be seen?
O wicken wisse, and onlesfull warded wight,

The seven Sages.

Why hast thou now deceived thine own knight?
Of whom thou knew all whole thou had the heart,
Of thy bewoyle now am I well expert:
For this is not the first time thou hast done,
Such harlotrie thou shalt rewe by yon moon.
While the watch time, there shall you still remain
And as law will thereafter thole the pain.
Then said the wife, My Lord, why say you so?
Where I was now there was witness far mo.
My mothers maide she came and fetched me,
Who lyes right sick, and is in point to die:
And then because I saw you well in rest,
To awake you I thought it not the best:
That coulde me steal from you the keyes away,
I thought pittie to awake you as ye lay.
For why? ye know ye are feeble and old,
To awake you off your first sleep you would
Ben sick the more, and wonder fill disposed,
Therefore craie not that your gates were unclosed
And my mother she is so wonder sick,
A word to me she scarcely had to speak,
Anoynted elle, and made her latter will,
And now my self hath hasted me you till,
Therefore, good Lord, I pray you heartfully
Take no suspect, nor think no fault in me,
For I had never such thing to my thought,
Since the first time to your bed I was brought:
Nor never had such thing into mine heart,
Nor never shall while death us two depart.
Therefore, I pray you, let mee not be tane

The seven Sages.

With the town watch here standing mine alane.
For now the houre approacheth wonder near
That the watch rise, and they will finde me heer,
Which is to mee an eberlasting shame,
And also to you it is a great defam.
Were I guiltie, or yet committed crime,
I would bouchsafe y^e hold me out this time.
Then said the knight, Doubtlesse you come not in,
For no prayer of you, nor all your kin.
While that the watch betake you in the snare,
Then where y^e were to them y^e must declare.
Then the wife said, My Lord, if so y^e do,
In great defame of us both it comes to,
And all our kin, allya, and our friends,
And all other that either us pertaines,
Ere I be here now with the town watch found,
I had rather giue an hundred thousand pound.
Noth hee ill wife, and woman far defamd,
Thou hast so done, that thy self thou hast shamd,
Far better were so, thy fault punisht bee,
And here thole shame, that all mankind may see,
Then so, to thole punishment after dead
In burning hell, where there is no remead.
Then said the wife, My Lord, I you require
In this one point to fulfill my desire.
Now so, his sake that died on the tre
Thole not such shame so sakelesse come on me.
The knight answered to his wife again,
O wicked wife, thy woords are all in vain:
Thou comes in untill the watches knaw,

The seven Sages.

And bes punisht after the course of law.
Then said the wife, I perceiue this is done,
All for enuie, and ye are impoꝛtune.
When since so is, ye are impatient,
I will you shew in few words mine intent,
My Lord, ye know at this gate stands a Well,
Wherein but doubt now I shall dꝛowen my self,
Rather then I and all my kin be shame,
And als your self shall not scape undefamde.
Then said the knight, would God that such had be
Long tyme before I saw you with my eyne.
So as these two together were at talk,
The moon was dark, and hid was under walk:
Then said the wife, My Lord, and be your will,
That I here bide, the same I must fulfill:
Or I bide here, and for to shame my self,
Rather I shall be dꝛowened in this Well:
But I will do as a good Christian wight
Ought to her Lord, and to a noble knight,
Yet ere I die, my minde is and intent
Besore you here to make my testament,
Here to the Lord first I bequeath my soul,
My bones to lie in the church of Sainct Paul:
As for my goods, had I ten thousand pound,
Ten thousand kye gangiꝅg upon the ground:
Als many ploughes gangiꝅg upon the land,
Als many shep as thereupon might stand,
I would leaue all unto your owne person,
Then to dispoꝛne at your discretion:
And if ye please any thing for to deal

Into

The seven Sages.

Into almes, for my well and soules heal,
That I refer to your own wit and will,
What euer yee please, the same for to fulfill.
For well I know yee will do but the right,
I say no more, my sweet husband good night.
As shee that said, in her armes could shee take
A mækle stone, and in the Well did swake.
That being done, shee came right prybly
To the gate cheek, and stood right quietly.
The knight hearing the stone fall in the Well,
Belæved well it was the Ladie sell:
And said, Alas, my wife is dyownd but doubt:
So in a fray the knight came rushing out:
And to the Well he sped him but moze baid.
The wife that saw, in at the gate shee said:
And closed the gate right wonder sure and fast,
To the window in haste shee could her cast.
In the mean tyme the knight stood at the Well,
Pourning right sore, and saying to him sell,
Who to the houre that euer I was boyn,
My lobing wife alace is now forloyn.
Who to the houre that euer I closed my gate,
Who to the houre in my window I sate,
To spy my wife, which I know was sakelesse,
I am the wyte now of her death doubtlesse.
Alas, alas, now is there no remead,
Through wilfulnesse of us both shee is dead.
The Ladie heard in window where shee lay,
And to the knight with sturdie wordes could say,
O yee old fool, that should bee cald a knight,

what

The seven Sages.

What do y^e here standing this time of night?
Out of your bed waking so wonder late,
Waiting your whores and harlots on the gate.
Night it not serbe my bodie at your will?
But y^e will passe your old whozedome untill:
This is nightt^y you use this same passage,
Ye shall repent right soze your old foolage.
The knight hearing the voice of his own wife,
He was right glad that she was yet on life,
Saying, Ladie, well is me evermore
Loving to God that I may hear you there;
For I believ^e y^e had ben in the Well.
Quoth she, Did soul, kepe out of it thy sell:
Thou serves better soz to have punishment
For thy badw^orie, noz holy wayes to went.
Quoth he, Ladie, yet let such language be,
What is the cause y^e say such things to me?
When I locked the gate, y^e shall mee trow,
I did nothing but to have chastened you:
For in no wise I never did intend
Tou to displease, oz any way offend.
For when I heard the noise into the Well,
Unto mine heart there strake a cruell knell:
And in all haste you saw as I came down,
Tou to preserve, that no wife you should drow.
Old dozened Carle, quoth she, I hear the lie,
Thou was ovr^e peart to judge such thing of me:
But I perceibe this proverb is right true,
The unjust oft the innocent doth pursue:
Thou liest to me, and hast done many time,

After

The seven Sages.

After the guilt when thou committest the crime,
As thou dost now, that never to thee sailde,
And thy great sight as now I have assailde;
And have thee tane into the sicker snare,
Wherefore but doubt for mee thou shalt stand there,
While watches come, and with them to be seen,
In times bygone an old fool thou hast been,
That me lightlied, thine own wife and despised,
And to thy whores went oftentimes disguised:
And ever hast done since the first time I thee kend,
All thy lifetime in lowwile thou hast spend:
But God will not let such unpunisht be,
For many faults thou hast done oft to mee:
For hee is iust, and will have such things shewn,
And I shall make it to the people known:
Therefore stand still, thou comest not in but doubt,
While the watches, and all neighbours about
What one thou art they may perfectly know,
And thereafter to bide the stroke of law.
Then said the knight, Ladie, I have marvell,
To what effect should you such to mee tell.
We know right well that I am old and haire,
And in this town I have bene evermair:
And well I know where my name was proclaimed,
Untill this houre for no cause was defamd.
Therefore my Ladie, for the good Lords name,
Thole mee come in, and let mee not take shame.
Shee said, Old fool, thou spendest thy time in vain,
There shalt thou stand, and thole of law the pain.
Better it is to thole here patiently,

After

When

The seven Sages.

When evermoze in hell condemned be.
Salomon saith thre things that God doth hate,
A poore proud man above his own estate,
When a rich man in consuetude to lie,
And an old man a fount fowl for to be:
And so but doubt ye brook these vices thre,
What need had ye to lie so far on me.
As for riches ye have enough at will,
Why should ye then your speech with falset spill?
As for a fowl, ye are one wonder touth,
For as ye know the fount of all my youth
At your pleasure ye have had evermaile,
Yet to bewyle ye have gone late and aile.
Wherefore God hath done wonder well you till,
Though ye contrare both his command and will,
Hath persever'd till in your barterrie,
Yet he will not therefore ye perishe be:
But lent you grace your sins here to repent,
Wherefore ye must bide the law and judgement.
Then said the knight, My Ladie best beloved,
Howbeit God be contrare a sinner mov'd:
Yet not the lesse as all sinners shoud frow,
God of his grace is to us mercifull.
What time we will for bear, and aile repent,
Then God so giveth our sins incontinent.
Wherefore Ladie since such grace God us sends,
How let me in, and I shall make a mends.
Then said the wife with voice stout and auster,
Hence the barlot, where devil get we this sciter:
Talk what thou please, but truly thou shalt frow

When

The seven Sages.

Then comes not in, that here I make a towe.
And as that they speak these words them among,
In the mean time the Watches bell they rang.
Then said the knight Good wife, let it such things,
Heare ye not now how that the watch bell ringes
Suffer mee not for euer to take shame,
Which is forsooth degrading of my name.
Quoth she, ye know not what you ringing meanest
To the welfare of your soul it pertaines.
Therefore ye must take all sooth patiently.
For your pennance you must thole openly.
A trespasser but doubt ye have long ben
To God and me, as shall be heard and sen.
In the mean time these twosome as they talked,
Up throgh the street the watches came that waked
Some into hands they took this noble knight,
With great marvell, how he into the night.
Upon the street durst sooth of lodging be,
They said to him, It was no knights due tie.
Considering well the doubt of law he kend,
He was oberbold the contrare to pretend.
Shee hearing this, with a loude voice shee cryde,
O my good friends, the truth now have ye spied
Of that trauellour, and also a doted fool,
That his soul lost on no wise he could cool:
But upon whores sooth passing in the night,
Pansie ye if such pertaines to an old knight,
That my body at pleasure had all time,
Consider now if hee committed crime:
With whores all night, and coming in at morn,

But

The seven Sages.

But of such faults I have him oft forborn,
Belching ay such things hee should have mended,
But ye may see if now hee hath offended:
Therefore if ye of such men have correction,
Conform to law ye punish his person,
That such old devils as hee so lang hath been
May take example of him before their een:
For hee to me hath been a great traitour,
I know such one yet never made nature.
Then the watches took him incontinent
To deep prison, with him in haste they went,
While day was light, and after the sun rose,
With him the watch unto the Doorest goes,
Shewing to him the fashion to the end,
How in the night they did him apprehend:
And how to them his wife such plaints had made,
Incontinent the Doorest but more bade
To a pillar stood in midst of the street
Also set him up, fast bound both hands and feet:
That all people within that great citie
To his great shame might him behold and see:
And so this knight but any fault defam'd
Was by his wife so sakelesse ever sham'd.
The Doctour then said humbly to the King,
And please your Grace ye have understanding
What I have said: The Emperour said, right well,
Your sermon hath sentence, so have I feel.
The Master said, It shall worse happen you
For chanced this knight, for truth this shal ye trow,
If that ye do for the words of your wife,

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The seven Sages.

Put down your son, and reabe from him his life:
The Emperour said, That wife was far to blame,
That her husband put to such open shame:
And hee sakelesse, the soul ill her betide,
Shee was the worst that yet did gang or ride:
And for the tale that thou hast told to mee,
This day but doubt my son hee shall not die.
The Paster said, My Lord, ye doing so,
Within few dayes both pleasure and great so
Of your own son you shall have sir, but faile.
So this Paster when hee had past his tale
Thanked the king of his benevolence:
So took his leave, and home-ward is gone hence.

MORALITAS.

ALL cunning Clarkes that could in stories write,
By all their craft could never yet indite
The great mischief by women done to men,
The traitourie, displeasure and despite,
Heirship, slaughter, the great sorrow and stre
At length to write it tyrd their pith and pen,
They were so huge, and ngly as yee ken:
The teinth thereof they could get never ended,
Because to men so oft they have offended.

Of them what sayes the great Philosopher
Aristotle, and als that digne doctour
Cicero and *Salomon* said some part,
For all his wit, great riches, and honour,
They caused him bee a great idolatour:
And from great God causd him turn all his heart:
Likewise *Virgil* that was so well expert,

The seven Sages.

In till a creill they hangd him over the waw,
To his great shame that all the people saw.

Aristotle which was the *A per-se*
Of naturall wit, and great Philosophie:
They bridled him as hee had been a horse.
Sampson detcined by great subtiltie.
What got *David* for all his prophesie,
Now yee may see neither wildome nor force
Cannot resist the curstnesse of their corse,
Enough thereof who likes to read *Galer*,
And what hee wants now some thing sayes *Chaucer*.

Therefore, I say, I think it no mai vell,
This gentle knight whereof our tale wee tell:
Considering hee was so old and hair,
Deceived was by this hogh-lop of hell,
With so great sight kest the stone in the Well,
A lace, alace, and wo for evermare
Shee should escape, if that I had been there,
To helped her, that fierie brand so fell,
Her to have drownd mine hands they should not spare.

Shee making fault, and hee alwayes faultlesse,
Shee at her game, and he alwayes guiltlesse:
She being false, and hee so traist and trew,
Hee being firm, and shee alwayes faithlesse
Did him accuse of that each deed doublesse,
Wherein her self was guiltie well shee knew,
For all his speach nothing would on him rewe:
Fy, fy, false fiends, and furious hell furnace,
In bitter gale turnes all your game and glew.

Now sirs, perceiue her sight and subtiltie,
When hee sleept shee stole away the key,
Where shee pleased past foot th to her pleasure,
When shee came home so loud as shee could lie,

Saying,

The seven Sages.

Saying her mother was on point to die,
With many words dissembled under colour,
Forged with falset, lurking for displeasure:
And then at short how shee made her testament :-
O mercy, God, here is a false intent.

O subtile schrew, and very Sathans seed,
Impe of the devil, care neither crosse nor creed:
Tyner of truth, with tongue intoxicate,
Belzebubes bairnes, infernall burning gleed,
With fained fare, thy teirs well canst thou feed:
And flattering words fullild all with deceit,
Lyned with leasings, Lawrie goes by your gate;
Net of the fiend, in vengeance yee avauunt you,
Baner of bail, the devil hee dow not daunt you.

Yee married men, in time keep well your keyes,
Now may yee know such womens properties,
What mercy, grace, or good deed they will grant:
If yee desire of them any supplies,
Then shall they make to you a thousand lies,
You to obey are evermore obstant,
What they would have that thing they will not want:
In that they serve, give them the spenyie flies,
That may serve well for such an unsonsie saint.

Who can excuse this double devils lim?
Such a false trick so trimly plaide to him:
Shee in the fault, and hee so innocent:
Fy bitter birch, bold burning bair so blim,
Thy clean conscience to heaven will cause thee clim:
Or down to hell ever bee permanent,
In Plutoes palace there to bee president,
Among that grace lesse garison so grim,
Gr eat pittie were thou should bee there absent.

For why? thou canst so well a leasing cleck,
Turn a p side down, ay to thine own effect,

Though

The seven Sages.

Though of thy tale a word bee never true,
Leasings to rain thou takes but little reck,
And the blamelesse ay to put in the black,
And make fine black of it was never blew,
Of a true tale thou canst well change the hew,
Therefore I pray the devil to break thy neck,
Or in a seck to bee drowned, adew.

A loving to the second Doctour.

GOd thank thee Doctour for thy dayes work,
Thou hast thee shewn a loving cunning Clark:
The innocent hath succoured through thy tale
Let the Empresse now bluster, bleat and bark,
For at this time shee is put by her mark,
Trusting in God that shee shall not prevaile,
But yet I know again shee shall assaile
The Emperour with some storie so stark
But her vain words shall nothing her availe.

The third tale of the Empresse.

The Empresse heard how all the matter yead,
And how the childe was not yet put to dead:
For very sturt in her minde was right wo,
It was most like her heart to burst in two.
To her chamber then shee past soon within,
And there began to skart and rive her skin:
And cride aloud that ever I was born,
Into my cnd would I had been forloren:
I being childe unto so great a king,

What

The seven Sages.

That I should thole and suffer such a thing,
As of yon devil, and a rank renigald,
Woe to desoyre so openly he wald
To my great shame, and woefully dishonour,
I bringe Queen unto the Emperour:
And can hereof get no mends nor remed,
I pray to God if I were fairly dead.
So this was shoun unto the Emperour,
How this Ladie was in such displeasure,
Into all haste to her chamber hee went,
And said, Ladie, I pray you not lament
So inwardly, for it becomes you nought,
Take not so far neither in minde nor thought.
She said, My Lord, the love I ow to you,
Makes mee more hurt, in heart more sorrowfow.
Then displeasure of yon dumb devils head,
Wherefore good Lord, so great God mot mee speed,
The inward love that I unto you bear
So causeth mee remain still with you here:
Or else I had to my father departed,
To my countrie, where I am not so hearted:
To your behove, and pleasure night and day,
This is the cause I will not passe my way:
For if I did, then a cause it should bee
Of great discorde, and als enimitie
Betwene my father, and you for evermore,
This is the cause, I will not passe therefore:
For well I know he would revenge my quarrell,
And to conqueste put all this realm in percell:
For my father hee is a puissant prince,

The seven Sages.

Of diuerse realmes, and of great reuerence:
Knew hee truely of my great displeasure,
I know hee would increase so in rancour:
That this countrie for that should soze repent,
That is the cause from him I mee absent,
For your pleasure, and yet yee will not trow,
That I will do such pleasure unto you.
The Emperour said, Madame, be well inclinde,
Let such malice remove out of your minde,
For so long time as God will lend mee life,
I thinke neuer to fail to you my wife.
My Lord, said shee, I pray God yee liue long,
Howbeit that I do liue in threap and thzong.
But I dread soze, and heauily I fear,
That it chance you that chanced this hinder yeer
To a great knight, and to his son alone,
After the time that his father was gone:
Through sudden chance departed to the dead,
Yet his own son would not butie his head.
The Emperour said, That was a fellon fead,
The son would not burie his fathers head:
That example I pray you to mee show.
Shee said, My Lord, will yee take heed and know
It shall you do great good I take on hand.
Quoth hee, Shew forth, and let mee under stand.
So shee began with all expedition,
As shee best could to say forth her sermon.

In this citie that now is called Rome,
Which in these days was head of Ch:istendome

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The seven Sages.

There dwelt a knight, the south countie lord,
 Had but one son, and hee had daughter many.
 This knight was giben to hauking and hunting,
 Great toznamen, and to swift horse running,
 To merrinelle, and all kinde of pleasures,
 That might hold up, and set smoth his honours.
 So ebery year so great riches hee spent,
 Which thise overcame his rentall and his rent,
 Wherewith then grew to him skant of riches,
 His dayly chear and expence did decrease.
 In the mean time there was an Emperour,
 Octavian, a man of great honour,
 Which in riches so highly did abound,
 That his compare was not upon the ground.
 That in so much hee had in his treasure,
 Of gold and silber the which filld a towre;
 Which gold and towre though hee had it at large,
 To a great knight to keepe hee gabe in charge.
 This other knight, whom of lines spake of aye,
 That had spended his rent and meekle maye,
 On idle games, as hunting and hauking,
 Late sitting up, and out of time spending,
 To such poorteth hee grew and great thirlage,
 That hee behob'd to sell his heritage,
 Hee cald to him his son which was his aire,
 And all the case to him hee could declaire.
 This is the cause but doubt, my son, said hee,
 I am compeld so with great pobertie,
 That I on force and need must sell my land,
 Except remead come at some other hand.

The seven Sages.

Whereby though I may inuring my life dayes
Live honestly, this to his son hee sayes.

For if I chance to sell mine heritage,
Ye know my daughters will want good marriage.
He said, Father, if so it with you stands,
That you on need aduillie must ybur lands,
At your pleasure thereof I am content,
Do as ye please, for thereto I consent.

The father said, Now haue I tane in thought
A good conceat, and fell it will I nought,
But unto thee: I know the Emperour
Of gold and rent he hath fulfilled a towre.
Let us two passe with instruments by night,
And break the towre with subtiltie and sight,
Wee shall obtain riches abundantly,
Shall us hold up euer in honestie.

Then said the son, (shortly to make an end,
There is not one that counsell can amend:
It is better take from the Emperour
Part of his gold, his silber, and treasure,
Then for to sell your land and heritage,
Whereby though your bayones shall live ay in thirlage
So in one voice these two did condescend
To break this towre but carrie they intend.
So on a night with instruments they pass,
And through the towre an hole they got at last,
Then to the gold at larges where it lay,
Furnight their sacks, and unscried came away,
Paid all his debt, and liu'd as merrie,
As of befoze in every game and glee.

The seven Sages.

In hauking, hunting, and in toynament,
While at the last the gold was gone and spent.
In the mean time the keeper of the towre,
Who had in charge all the gold and treasure,
Perceiv'd the hole, and the gold stoln away,
Hee was so ie, and knew not what to say,
Into all haste past to the Emperour,
And shew how thieves had stoln his treasure.
The Emperour said in yre all angerly,
What is the cause thou showes such things to mee?
To thee I gave (as to a true serband)
My gold to keep, and that thou took in hand.
At thee again I ask it to restore,
As it becomes thou shalt thole pains therefore.
When that this knight the Emperour so heard say,
Hee said no more, but humbly went his way,
And saw there was no matter to debate,
Hee unbethought himself of a conceat,
Thinking right well that they would come again
To seek more gold, to take them with a train:
Before the hole a ton hee could be prepare,
Spingled with pick, birdlime, and such like ware,
So thick and tuch, that who therein come would,
Contrare their will there still it would them hold:
And none might come into that hole again,
But hee must needs fall in the samine train.
Not long after, as I before have said,
This other knight when hee the gold spent had,
Hee and his son again went to the towre,
To steal more gold then from the Emperour:

The seven Sages.

So the father first in the hole hee went,
 And in the tun hee fell incontinent
 Into the neck, and there stuck as a stone,
 Considered well that his fortune was gone,
 Said to his son, Come thou forward no way,
 For at this time I am tane for the prey.
 Come thou forward, thou shalt not fail to die,
 And none of us another may supplie.
 Then said the son, if yee may not escape,
 Then are we both but doubt tane in the rape.
 God us defend, father, that so not bee,
 But at this time yee get some help of mee.
 And if I may not help you now my self,
 In haste I will both help and seek counsell.
 The father said, I see is no remead,
 But with thy sword thou must strike off my head.
 And when they finde my dead bodie headlesse,
 Then shall yee all of this shame be sahesse,
 So none shall know what person did this deed,
 For in whose brest those bargains did imbed.
 Then said the son, Now father by the road
 Your counsell is both honest, iust and good:
 For if so chanced in this case yee were known,
 Also our shame to all men should be shon:
 So should we not escape the cruell dead,
 So I think best that I smite off your head.
 And even with that as hee had said the word,
 Out of the sheath anone hee drew his sword,
 His fathers head hee hint off hastily,
 And in a gutter hee kest it neryby.

when

The seven Sages.

When this was done, then past hee home his way
To his own house, unto his sisters way,
Shew them the case, and all the matter hail,
Who soze did weep pitily and bewail.
Then after this the keeper of the toure,
Who had in charge the gold and the treasure,
Where the hole was within the tun he sand
A headlesse corps onto the neck standand:
Whereof hee had both marbell and dzeabour,
In haste hee past, and told the Emperour:
Incontinent through all the tolon then yead
How there was found a bodie but a head
Into the tun, the which the knight did set,
Who stole the gold to take him in the net.
Then to this knight the Emperour said but fall,
Take the dead corpe, and knitt to a horse tail,
And dzeaw it through the streets of the cite,
And perceiue well where any murmure bee,
Any sozroto, hurt, weeping, or mourning,
Then may ye well perceiue where that such things
Be attained, where any person mournes,
They are guilty, and know of suchlike turnes,
And of that house is principall but doubt,
What stole the gold, therefore seek well about:
If such ye finde, take them and all their fellows,
Without merrie cause hang them on the gallous.
The officers without delay they went,
And complety the Emperours comandment.
When the daughters the dead corse saw come by,
For inward too they gabe an hideous cry,

The seven Sages.

For kindly love, and fatherly pitle,
 To see that corps so drawn through the cite.
 When their brother, the son of that dead knight
 Heard them so mourn, bethought him of a sight.
 Wherefore the corps through the cite was drawn,
 To the people the cause was right well known.
 And wist no way for to eschew the case,
 So he himself soze wounded in the face,
 While that the blood abundantly came out,
 What the sisters of his life had great doubt.
 The officers perceibed the weeping,
 The noise, the cry, the start, and the grating:
 Into the house they entered but delay,
 And demanded wherefore they made the fray.
 Then said the son, when my sisters was slaine
 So soze wounded, as now your self may know,
 They wipt and cride and mourned in their mood,
 And as yee know few women may see blood:
 This was the cause of the great lamenting
 Of my sisters, we know none other thing.
 The officers hereto they gave credence,
 Because they got no more experience,
 But went their wayes deceived all and blinded,
 Cause the right way they could not see nor find it.
 Then took the corpse of this same headlesse knight
 On the gallous let it hang day and night,
 Till all the people did wonder and marvell
 Of the stolne gold when they the tale heard tell:
 And yet the son after his fathers dead
 Would not burie in the churchyard his head:

The seven Sages.

For off the tree his body would down take,
This did the son for his own father sake.
Ye may perceiue the great love and labour
To his father hee had all time and honour.
The Emperesse said, Good sir, and please your grace
What have I said, have ye well tane the case?
The Emperour said, Madame, so have I well,
What ye have said I have it tane right well.

The declaration of the Em- peresse third tale.

The Emperesse said, I am right wonder too,
That of your self, and your son it be so;
For his sons sake the knight (as I have told)
When hee was your lands hee left unsold.
When hee wanted hee had none other shift,
But for his son then hee committed theft,
And that his children after that hee was dead
Should have no shame, hee could strike off his head:
And yet his son would not do such reward,
To burie his head in church, nor church-yard:
For yet would not neither by night nor day
Down off the tree take his bodie away:
In the same sort both night and day ye labour
For to promote your son to great honour:
With day and night hee sets all his intention
For to put to utter confusion,
And you destroy is dayly his desire,
That hee may reign, and brooke the whole empire.
By counsell is ye rather put him down,

Cre

The seven Sages.

Ere hee from yonged the empire and crown,
The Emperour said, howe mot I thide and they,
A good example now hast thou shewn me,
I might have thold after his fathers dead
Yet by some flight to cause burie his head.
Cruelly my son hee shall no longer scape
Upon the end in be hanged in a rape.
No officer at home hee gave command
To take his son, and to hang him fra hand.
Down through the street they led him hastily
To the gallous but metry for to die;
And as they led the young man through the street,
All the people began to moorn and greet
Saying, Alas, the Emperours only child
To the gallous is led there to be killed.
Alas, said they, what is his fathers name,
To his one son for to be so unkinde;
Now this is the first condemned hee hath been,
And few can tell what doth the matter mean.
But all this comes by the Queens false request,
That hee is led sooft down the omphal gate and
In the mean tyme down the gate hee shal goe,
The third Passer camo yding, bid to Cratostig now
And saith to the child, so wonder not the dead,
To his Passer yet hee hath bin his head.
As hee would say, what hee have thilke of me,
Do ye not well, there is no done but to me.
The people cride, Good Passer, hallo and hey,
And for your child good help that ye provide
So in all haste but any more delay,

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The seven Sages. 110 d T

To the palace hee spurred his good palfrey
 And when hee came before the Emperour,
 Hee hailed him with reverence and honour:
 Who made answer to the Master again,
 Though you hee come, your voyage is in vain;
 Your coming here shall nothing you availe,
 For you are come here to flatter with your tale.
 The Master said, Within this seven years space
 Better reward I have serued at your grace:
 Yet I beleeve to get better reward
 And please your grace, that my talking be heard.
 Reward, said hee, at mine hand I serue you thought,
 For the dumb boy to me that ye haue brought.
 For hee serue all seven the way painful death,
 Each one of you to gallows hee be led;
 I deliuer my son speaking to you,
 Quite dumb but speech ye seven haue made him now.
 And also hee would haue dealed my Queen,
 Contrare her will as hee well heard and seen.
 The Master said, Will hee ye say hee is dumb,
 Will ye suffer but a short while to come,
 I finde you hee the mightie God to worship,
 That hee hath speak eke the fifth day at his word,
 For hee that made the dumb man for to speak,
 The deaf to hear, to health restore the sick,
 Hee will restore your son to speech again
 Within few dayes, and that I say in plain.
 And where ye say hee would deale your Queen,
 If any man hath euer heard or seen
 Such conditions either by late or air,

Since

The seven Sages.

Since hee with us remaind, made repair,
 That hee is guiltie of all that yee have said,
 When I to die, therefore am wonder glad.
 But Salomon sayes right well into his book,
 Who like therein to read, and soe to look,
 No malice is, nor was, nor yet hee can
 Above the malice of an ill woman.
 That shall I probe by an example good,
 That women are the fountain and the flood,
 The verie root, and spectall intention
 Of all falses, leasing, and deception;
 And if yee put your son now to the dead,
 For your wifes words, her falses, and her lead,
 It shall chance you as it did to the man.
 That slew his Wy. through flight of a woman.
 Which bird hee lov'd above each other thing,
 And as the truth is told him but leasing.
 The Emperour said, I pray the tell mee that
 Between the man, the wife, and the Wyat.
 The Paster said, Your son againe cause cald,
 That hee thole not the utter charge of blame.
 When shall I tell my tale to your pleasure,
 To your profite, welfare, and als honour.
 The Emperour said, Paster, for this one day
 Hee shall not die, come after what so may.
 The Paster said, God thank your grace againe,
 So hee his tale began, as followes plaine.

MORE

The seven Sages. MORALITAS.

WEE will continue now at this place,
The Doctors tale a little space,
And something wee will tell
Of the Emperesse comparison,
How shee compar'd the Kings person
Unto a thief so fell.

Shee compar'd the Emperour
To the false knight that brake the towre,
When hee should sold his land:
For poorteth was compeld to steal,
Look yee if shee compar'd it leal,
And so well shee it fand.

This knight committed traitourie,
That stole from the authoritie,
Either great thing or small:
Wherefore hee served for to hing,
For who that steales ought from the King,
They may not bide the law.

Likewise this knight (as was well known)
Outthrough the citie hee was drawn,
To his great lack and shame,
Then hanged on the gallow trees,
Perceive how these two well agrees,
To the Kings great defame.

And her own Emperour compar'd
To a poor knight was all despair'd,
A traitour and a thief:
That so shee would was most likely,
That the Emperour so should bee,
God send her a mischief,

As

The seven Sages.

As to the Knight that would sold his land,
And waxt so wonder poor in hand,
And alwayes superspended:
Who ever spends by their due rent,
But fail shall after fore repent,
When hee may not amend it.

Thereafter comes necessitie,
Hunger, poorteth, and povertie,
To steal that hee must need.
Then tynes hee honour and manhead,
And thereon followes shame and dead,
Of ill spending it breedes.

Had this Knight spended with pleasure,
According to his own treasure,
After his facultie:
Hee should not need to break a towre,
Nor stollen gold from the Emperour,
Nor poor nor needed bee.

Good Sirs, that have rent and riches,
Bee not in spending so recklesse,
But with reason and right:
For then off force hee must sell land,
Or els take some ill deed in hand,
As did this headed Knight.

Who leaped once, and past againe,
Still ay in slouth for to remain,
Which all men should forbear.
It may chance once a man to slip,
But hee should no wile ly therein.
Nor still to persevere.

For as that one knight found a wile
That other knight for to beguile,

And

The seven Sages.

And take him in the net,
Even so the fiend is finding ay
Some new gate to fang in his prey,
Who ay to sin are set.

The bird lime is to hold them still,
And ay in pleasure take their will,
For as the gold was sweet
That causde this Knight to come again,
That is, in sin ay to remain,
While they yeeld up the spirit.

Then art thou sicker in the snare,
When death comes thou dow do no mair,
But to the gallous led:
That is to hell without remed:
Then all thy gold that was so red
It stands thee in no stead.

Therefore who would live in honour,
Sec they their gear spend with measure,
Bee not ov'r liberall:
Spend not in prodigalitie,
But as effeirs thy facultie,
Or doubtlesse wa~~th~~ thou shall.

Sometime may chance a man spend mair
Upon a day then hee may spair
To spend in other nyne.
I grant, but yett ye shall consider,
Put sparing dayes, and them together,
And so small shall yett nyne.

Offspending is three kindes of branches:
The first to spend lye never franchises
So long as hee hath lye
But ever spending in a rane,

While

The seven Sages.

While all that hee hath is quite gane,
On force this man must steal.

The second spends with great honour,
With honestie and good measure,
Neither meekle nor skant,
But sometime spares and sometime spends,
And guides well that which God him sends,
So this man can not want.

The third hee is so great niggard,
To spend hath neither hand nor heart;
And ay sayes hee hath nought:
Ever sparing, and ever wants,
And to have gear hee never grants,
For all that ever hee wrought.

Of these three let us take the mids,
The wise man then expressly bids,
Therefore I you beseeke,
This is no honest man to grieve,
But see that yee put not your lieve
Further then hand may reeke.

A reproach or reprove to the Emperesse.

Corrupted corse unclean, thou springing Well of vice,
Thou fickle fiends Queen, thou perillous all Empricke,
Thou cruell cocatrice, and kindly crocodile,
For all thy tales nice, thou shalt not get thy will:
False gigiot iangling gill, thou person'd spewing spout,
Thy bones burnt on an hill I think to see but doubt.

The

The seven Sages.

The tale of the third Master,

or the Burges Pyat.

Vpon a time there dwelt in a cittle
A noble man, and a burges was he,
That had a bird well fed up in a cage,
Which was a Pyat call in our language.
This bird she was so well learned to speake,
That she coult talk latin, hebzeu, and greke:
And when she had thes languages per fite,
Her master took of her a great delite:
So by p[ro]cesse all thing she heard o[ut] say
To her master incontinent would she say.
This Burges man he had a wife right fair,
As ye now haue, wanton and debonaire,
Which o[ut] all thing he loved ever best.
But by contrate her love was not so best:
Because it passed from the Burges might,
Her appetitie to complish day and night,
As she desired at her pleasure to haue:
What would she then, but chuse another knave
With her to play, as she thought best pleasure,
Whom she best lov'd, and held him in fauour:
And so behav'd her husband on a day
To other towne in voyage make journey,
For merchandise to buy and for to sell,
For merchant men at home ay may not dwell,
But in this world to wander work, and win,
While of this life that they depart and win:
But yet this wife had not such thing in minde,
To her pleasure her thought was all inelude.

The seven Sages.

So when her spouse worth of the town was went,
 Without tarry then for her love shee sent,
 That they might make good chear and merrinesse,
 As the good wife thought she could best adzeesse:
 And so they did at their own appetite,
 When lovers mates of others take delight.
 This said the wyf on her perch where shee sat,
 What merrinesse that her husie was at:
 And to her master told when he came hame,
 And caused her husie get outrage and blame.
 So them betwixt rose up a bargaine stout,
 Which many of their neighbours heard about.
 The good wife said, Pardon me Sir, I perceiue
 What great favour and love to me ye have.
 And said, ye give more trust unto your wyf
 Then unto me, and still more sets her by.
 But so long as your yeat is on life,
 It shall not fail but we shall be at strife.
 The Burges said, My yeat can not lie,
 All that shee sees the truth shee will tell mee:
 For shee can not by no way nor ingine
 Any leasing into her heart diuine.
 And therefore I have more cause for to trow
 All that shee sayes far better than trust you.
 So day and night continually they chide,
 While on a day the Burges bask to ride
 In far countries to do his merchandise,
 As it affects such men, and to the guise
 But as so soon as hee his wayes forth went,
 For her lover shee sent incontinent.

The seven Sages. or T

To make her blith great solace and good cheer,
 But on the day he durst never come near:
 For great slander of people and common boyce,
 All the day long while night he belabour closte.
 As the night came he knocked at the gate,
 She ready was therat, and let him in.
 She said, We are right welcome unto me;
 You may come in, for no man will you see.
 He said, my love, your prayse I fear: I am
 For she will tell all she can see or hear.
 For she raised such tales betwixt us else,
 That all the town to other plainly told.
 She said, fear not, but boldly enter in,
 On me I take both perill and the sin.
 So he entred, and took no more in thought,
 And by the hand through the hall she him brought,
 And as these two through the hall made passage,
 The silly wy where she late in the cage
 To her hulle she heard her lover say,
 We shall be blith and make mirry while day:
 For you are she that I love all the best,
 But I fear sore the prayse we must.
 Quoth she, fear not, I bide not for to lie you,
 It is so dark the prayse will not see you.
 Then said the wy, howbeit I may not see you,
 I hear thy voyce, for right well know I you.
 To my master thou dost a great injurie,
 For of his wife thou makes a common whoreson;
 And his best bed which he belabours clean,
 Thou dost defile, which is well known and seen;

The seven Sages. on T

Which my spatter when he comes home shall know
 And the true truth soothly I shall shew how.
 When said her love, mine heart told I you not,
 That was would both be spied with the pyot,
 And tell the truth of all we heard and saw,
 And every word make her master to know.
 Take ye not fear thereof then said the wife,
 For talking shall cost her per chance her life:
 And this same night I shall revenged be
 Upon the py, as ye shall hear and see.
 So they to bed past both withouten fear,
 And what became the py at ye shall hear.
 About mid-night up this good wife she rose,
 Cried on her maid, and put on both their clothes:
 Incontinent along ladder they went,
 And to the roof of the house they did resort.
 And then the house about the pyot stage,
 Where that fire should be, came might get passage,
 Blenks of candles about the pyot head
 Most like fire-flaughts with cold water there shed.
 Small stones like peale upon her head they kest,
 Most like hail-stones, so this pyot was drest:
 So all the night without any remission
 Was this pyot pined almost unto the dead.
 Soon the morning came the young man saw
 At a back door, where none him heard nor saw.
 So this Burges came home with his seven sages,
 And to his py first he goes to his charges.
 And my best bird now tell me of the pyot,
 How then hath fared since I departed here.

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The seven Sages.

My bird, said he, what hast thou seen or heard?
 Tell me the truth for thy goodly reward.
 Master, she said, I shall you truly tell
 What that I heard, I saw, and what befell:
 We were not past off this town day and night,
 When that your wife did to you great amight,
 An other man into your bed shee laid,
 And all the night together they two plaid:
 And I them shew that they were both to blame,
 That I should tell to you when ye came home.
 Master but doubt this is a truthfull tale.
 Your wife I see is not for your abale.
 To the next point at me where that ye speer,
 How I have farde, in what soyt was my cheere:
 In your absence, surely I say you right,
 So great a storm as there was yesternight.
 Waide I never, since first time I was clecked,
 For yet my death so sore I not suspected,
 As that same night, but doubt, I say you plain,
 For very fear of fire-flaughts, hail, and rain:
 All the whole night it rained so on mee:
 That I belov'd but doubt droyned to see.
 When said the wife, Sir ye beleeve your py,
 How may ye know what kinde of woman am I:
 Ye may now see, and also may perceive,
 In times by gone how that your wyf did chere:
 A fairer night was never on the plain,
 Then was that night, that she says it was rain:
 A fairer night, a softer, and more clear,
 More pleasant night, I had not all this year:

The seven Sages.

Therefore y^e shall in all times sooth to come
Gibe her no faith no more noz shee were dumb.
Then this Burges knew not well what to say,
But to neighbours soon past hee on his way,
And demanded if such a night was fair,
That his pyat suffered the cold and cair.
They said, Neighbour, I walked all this night,
More solations, more softer, and more bright,
More stable a night, more curious and clear
Noz was that night saw I not this seven year.
Unto his house this Burges bowed hame,
And thought right well his wife had ser'b'd no blame.
The illie py he put in all the while,
And of all faults hee thought his wife was quite,
And said to her, I finde you trait and trew,
Wherefore y^e shall have no cause soz to rewe:
At my neighbors I asked all about,
Then as y^e say eachone they say but doubt:
A fairer night they say none could be found.
Then was that night, more softer and more sound.
And it requires to other who offends,
With all that heart soz to make them amends:
So you therefore a garment of the new
I promise you, because I finde you trew.
She said, Good Sir, saving your reverence,
Ye said not so, when ye gave him credence
Unto your py, which falsly on mee lyes,
Saying that I committed such a deed,
That never was into my minde and thought,
Noz in the world such thing I never wrought.

With

The seven Sages.

With her lessings betwixt us she hath sown
A great disoord, which all about is known:
Wherethoug I am blasphemed and defamd
Thoug all the town by your false py, am shamd:
Wherefoze no meat noz drink shall do me good,
While that I see your false pyats heart blood.
Then the Burges unto the pyat pass,
And said, False py, tell how becomes this cast,
Upon my wife so falsely for to lie,
Causing disoord oftymes with her and me.
Is this the thank, the gansell, and good deed
Thou renders me: so well I could thee feed
With mine own hands, with meats delicate,
Early at morn, and als at evening late,
Thoug thy lessings y^e hast made thoug the town,
A great slander, and foul defamation:
Whereto she gave no moze consent noz read,
Then I my self gave unto God his deed.
The stlie py heard her master say so,
Into her heart she was right wonder wo.
After, she said, God knowes if that I lie,
Your self will trust the very thing you see:
And well I wot the thing I said to you,
I heard and saw, why should I not it trow.
The Burges said, I hear thee boldly lie,
Knowes thou not well this tale thou told to me:
There was a night so troubled in the air,
With storm, fire, slaughts, hail, rain, & mekle mair,
Of ill weather thou had none other read,
But bidding ay the bitter hour of dead,

which

The seven Sages.

Which is right false, and never a word is true,
 Therefore but doubt thy falset thou shalt reio:
 And from henceforth thou shalt no leasing make,
 For of true tales thou shalt not make a crath:
 In speciall between mee and my wife,
 The law will well that it cost thee thy life,
 For the great lies thou hast invent and forge,
 With this same knife I shall cut off thy gorge,
 So in great wrath he took her by the neck,
 And with a knife her head he did off neck.
 The wife saw that, and shee was wonder glad,
 To her husband with merrinelle shee said,
 Now have ye done as a man of prudence,
 Howbeit before ye gave ob'r great credence
 Unto your py, which ay right falsly leio,
 Mine heart is glad now when I see her bleio:
 Now may we live all our life-time in rest,
 Since shee is gone that did us ay molest:
 For shee was ay the very instrument,
 Betwixt us two that leasing did invent.
 Wee blith, saith he, that instrument is hence,
 Forsooth to her I gave ob'r great credence.
 Now I know well all that shee said was false,
 But now therefore shee hath lost life and halfe.
 The Burges then blent up about his bigging,
 And saw an hole turred in the houle rigging,
 And well perceiv'd a little ladder stand,
 A water-tub, with stones, water, and sand,
 Which was down cast upon the sillie py:
 Then the Burges well under stood thereby,
That

The seven Sages.

That the poor py had told his tale right trew,
All the falsset and fashon then he knew,
How they had causd the pyet for to lie,
Thzough their falsset, and great subtiltie:
Now of my wife the falsset I perceape,
In time bygone how she hath plaid the knave-
Not regarding sin, shame, nor honestie,
But with her lovelying in harlotrie:
For wo is me, how great a fool was I,
For her falsset to say my silly py,
Wherein I had my pleasure and delite,
Alas, alas, my wife had all the witte.
But in no wise my self I can excuse,
That her counsell so greatly I did use:
But in a part but doubt I was so blinded,
And now the truth full sickely I finde it.
Who worth the time I gave her such credence,
Or to her tale I gave such audience.
Who worth such wives that are so ill inclinde,
Ever having so fained heart and minde,
With double heart, full of subtiltie,
I you assure they are ill companie,
Because my wife hath wrought me such like wo,
Here I give over mirth, gladnesse, and so:
All merchandise, householding, and barbazie,
In time coming a pilgrime I will be:
And makes me here unto the holy land,
Because I finde no faith in women stand.
So this Barges for credence that he gave
Unto his wife, left land, and all the lave.

The

The seven Sages. 751 adT

The Master said unto the Emperour,
 Sir, haue ye tanethis tale into labour?
 And what it meanes the samine vnderstand.
He said, Master, right well I take on hand.
The Master said, Was he not a false wife,
 With her leasings cause to reade the py her life.
The Emperour said, He was of falset sow,
 Her great leasings, no, her life I allow:
 Of the poore py sozely I do repent,
 What lost her life for speaking verement.
 Surely Master, a good tale he haue told,
 And for your sake this day I will cause hold
 My son vndeade, the moore while it be none,
 God thank your grace, quoth he, that such hath done.
 To the Lord God I heartly you commend,
 So this Master with blythesse home he wend.

MORALITAS.

O Marvellous God, the subtile sight,
 Suchlike I trow was never seen:
 Thou wariet wife and wicked wight,
 Of this Burgesse wife now I mean;
 So partly could avow, and cause her husband trow,
 That shee so fakelesse was and cleare,
 An innocent as shee had been,
 Then of falset sow.

So full of falset as shee is,
 For when they mark to do amisse,
 A thousand sundrie wayes they haue

The seven Sages.

To bring their matter to, when they have ought to do,
The wisest man they ay deceive,
And this Burges among the lave,
It is not so quoth shee,

So privily shee could provide
A posset for the sillie py,
And with such craft shee could it guide,
Changing the weather and the sky,
The boatgates did beguile the poor py with such wile,
Hurde up of whoredome upon thee fy,
Glutton of glew all wee may try,
Thou art a vessell vile.

The sauce that thou serves at mine hand
I cannot well indite,
To cause thine husband understand,
Of such vengeance thou had no wite,
O ranck ramping I youn, to mischief ever boun,
Steward of strife, who can thee quite,
Clinker of care, and of despite,
Great Mistresse to Mahoun.

Yee that have wives, give no credence
Ov'r soon unto their subtile sawes,
They will assoone finde a defence,
As they were learnd into the lawes;
For when they speak fairest their tale is ay falsest,
They will never give over the cause,
Though all the world the contrare knowes,
Their own tale they ay think best.

At sometime shee will cause a man,
To do the thing hee will repent,
When it is done no wayes shee can

The seven Sages.

Remead therefore for to invent,
Causd the sakelesse get wite, make her self clean and quire,
Therefore though shee bee impatient,
And in boldnesse her brow all bent,
That care yce not a mite.

Bee not readie to give reward,
Though shee it serve, while that thou see,
This Burgesse so in minde was mard,
While that the fillie Py flew hce:
Then promised her a gown, or else a new garmoun,
For her whoredome and harlotrie,
And her scabbed scurrilitie,
Fy mothers malisoun,

O twet untrue, and tail unficker,
Kindler of care bold balestrod:
Though one would binde thee with a wicker,
Thou wilt not keep good rule nor rod.
Thou art a furious flame: a wolf, and seemes a lamb,
Thou art a traitour wylictod,
That stink into the nose of God,
Thou art the devils dam.

A loving to the third Doctour, and Master.

Honour and praise good Doctour mot thou have,
That this one day the child thou hast causd save,
With thy true tale and example persite,
Beleeving well so shall do all the lave,
Though the Empresse with her tales would deceave
The Emperour, all for the childes despite.

But

The seven Sages.

*But at the last I know hee will her quite,
When yee and hee the sooth well do perceiue,
When yee finde fault there shall yee lay the wite.*

The fourth tale of the Empreſſe.

When the Empreſſe heard the child yet on liſe
She wept right ſair, & all her hair did riſe:
ſaying, Alas, too worſt the time and hour
That I was wiſe unto the Emperour:
Crying, mourning, and rybing down her face,
While the great noiſe paſt out through all the place
The Emperour heard the murmur at the laſt,
Incontinent hee to her chamber paſt,
Inquird the cauſe of all her deepe diſtreſſe,
Shee curſt the time that ſhee was made Empreſſe.
Would God, ſaid ſhe, when I came in theſe parts,
Howbeit that I had four and twentie hearts
Within my bowk, that they had all been rent
In ſmall pieces, ere I were dayly ſhent
On ſuch faſhion, as I am day by day,
But that your grace ſaves neither yea nor nay,
But whiles ye ſay, but doubt your ſon ſhall die,
And other whiles in great deſpite of mee:
Ye continue his life, and takes no cure,
Of my great ſhame, the ſhame, and the inſure
Hee did to mee, and als ſhame to your ſell,
Of this matter wherefore ſhould I more ſell?
For it is known out through the whole countrie
To what great ſhame hee purpoſd to bring mee.
But ye through ſlouth dila down, and lets ob'dybe

The seven Sages.

So day by day your son is yet on liue.
The Emperour said, I pray stand content,
And without doubt the mozn incontinent
Hee shall haue law without any remead
To bee hanged on gallows to the dead.
But yesterday it was a principall cause
That hee tholde not the judgement and the lawes,
Was for a tale that the Master mee told.
Pea then, said she, that is the thing they would
Wholong the time, liyrning the court shall change,
If ye do so that is a matter strange:
For their sake words good justice for to break,
So unto God ye haue a small respect.
But I fear soze, ye with your Masters seben,
It shall you chance the same example euen,
As once it chanced into this citie,
An Emperour and seben masters had hee,
Whom to hee gave credence both day and night,
They him beguild with their false fraud and sight.
The Emperour said, That tale I pray you tell,
With the Masters and Emperour how it fell.
She said, Whereto, or to what sect should I
Tell any tale, when it is not set by:
For yesterday a tale to you I shew,
Which in the self was very iust and true:
For your profite and honour I it told,
Whereon to think yet on no wise ye would:
For your honour and profite what I say,
Upon the mozn the masters do away:
And with their tales dayly turn upside down,

which

The seven Sages.

Which is but doubt for your destruction,
As in this tale that I shall tell to you,
And please your grace, for truth ye shall it know.
He said, Madame, heartily I you require,
I pray you tell, for it is my desire,
That by the same I may the warrer be,
And to eschew falsset and subtiltie:
Though I delay my sons dead for a day,
It answers not, nor cleanly takes away.
I shall it shew, quoth she, be it your will,
So ye will give good thought, and minde theretill.
Quoth he, Tell on, and I shall hear it than,
And so at short her tale this wise began.

Vpon a time (I reade into a quair)
In this citie sometime seven masters were,
Throgh whose science, great wisdom, and learning
The empire was ruled by their guiding.
The Emperour which at that time did reigne
But their counsell he took in hand nothing:
So he them held in such ease and daintie,
That he could not well want their companie.
They perceiuing his heart to them so kinde,
His goodly will, his dayly thought and minde,
That he could do nothing but their advise,
They were all seven holden so wonder wise:
They kept in minde a wonder subtil thing
By sorcerie, inchantment, and cunning:
But how long time the Emperour hee bade
In his palace, neither past forth nor cade,

But

The seven Sages.

But therein still held him in companie,
Hee saw as well as any man could see:
From his palace if hee went any time,
Thzough their slight craft hee could not see a time:
And this they did to the samine intent,
That they might with moze libertie frequent,
And intromet, and use the samine things,
That appertaines to Emperours and Kings,
And to dispone at their will all their rent,
This was their minde, their thought, and als intent
By the which thing these masters did purchase
Unto themselves gold, gear, and great riches:
And yet howbeit with their great sozcerie,
They made this King a time he might not see:
Out of his palace when hee past ay was blinde,
Among them all the way they could not finde,
With all their craft againe to cause him see
Out of his palace, but ever blinde was hee.
Above all this, the masters found such craft,
All the impire almost they made cleare fast:
If any man had dreame an unconth dreame;
The whole knowledge thereof they could expiant,
And make thereof interpretation:
For a ducate, or yet a golden crowne,
Whereby they got moze gold and great treasure,
Almost as much as from the Emperour:
So by this way, and other false and lye,
They conquest gold, great riches in plentie,
Moze in respect then had the Emperour:
And to them seven given dayly moze honour,

The seven Sages.

So on a day when that the Emperour,
With his Emperesse together with honour
Sat at table, to sigh in heart began:

The Emperesse saw, perceived, and said than,
What is the cause, shew mee of your dolour?

Why sigh ye so: or take ye displeasure?

The Emperour said to his Emperesse again,
Have I not cause of sorrow and great pain?

That I so long in such sort should be blinde,
And can thereof no good remedie finde.

My Lord, said she, will ye tent to my tale,
On honestie it shall help and prevaile:

If ye will do after as I you say,
Ye shall allow my tale another day.

In your empire seven great masters ye have,
And I beleve the seven do you deceive:

And are the cause of all your great disease,
And all your sorowes they guide even as they please:

And to themselves appropriate your rents
Through their false ways and subtille enchantments:

If it be so that they be found guiltye,
A shamefull death doubtlesse they set be to die:

Therefore my Lord, for all these seven now send,
And ask at them if they can help to mend

Your sore disease, and sore infirmitie,
Where your sight failes, again to cause you see:

If they say nay, and can finde no remedie,
Charge them warply under the pain of death:

And so they may consider well and see,
If they be cause of your great maladie:

The

The seven Sages.

The Emperour allowed well this tale,
And thought right well it was for his auaile.
Incontinent to them he was sent message,
For to compleet anone they took voyage.
And come kneeling befoze the Emperour,
Who them receiued in freedom and saour,
And shew to them his great infirmity,
How he was blind, and had such malady:
And how sometime that he saw wonder well.
And other times how he saw neuer a dell,
Then charged he them sharply on pain of deað,
Incontinent they seven should seek remead,
For it was shoun to him of verity,
They were the cause of his infirmity.
And get they not remead incontinent
Vnto the death they should be all torment.
Vnto these seven thus said the Emperour,
Whom of they stood in great fear and dreddour:
Then said these seven again with one consent,
We charge us Sir, with inconuenient.
With such like charge your grace now puts us to
It passes far our power for to do:
It is so hard and so difficill a thing,
That we cannot to good purpose it bring:
Into short time, but please your noble Grace,
For to grant us respite for ten dayes space:
We shall you giue answer conuenient,
Whereof I trust your Grace shall stand content,
Of their answer the Emperour was appeased,
Belæuing well of sicknesse to be eased.

The seven Sages.

So these masters unto their counsell pass,
To see if they could find the way or cast,
Fassion, ingine, supplie, mean, or remead:
Or any help to save themselves from dead,
And for to heale the kings infirmittie,
They kest the way, for them it would not be.
Wherefore they were all seven right sorrowfow,
And said, Yet we no help nor remead now:
To help this charge as we eachone do ken,
Without remead we are all but dead men.
Wherefore let us make all remead fra hand,
Seek and search south eachone in sundry land,
If that we can in any country find,
In time comming the Emperour be not blind.
And so they sought in many sundry town,
By East, by west, South, North, both up and down
It hapned them to ride upon a day,
Through a city where bairnes were at the play,
In the mean time came to them an old man,
And said, Masters, I pray you if ye can,
Of my nights dreame to make interpretation,
And for your wage I shall give you a Crown.
One of the bairnes that was then at the play,
To the Masters heard that man suchlike say,
And said, Good man yeis give a crown to me,
What means your dreame I shall you tell truly,
The old man said I dreame this hinder night,
That in my yard of water sprang upright:
A fresh spring well, fro whence came many springs
Throgh all the eird: now tel what such thing means

¶

Then

The seven Sages:

Then said the bairn: take ye a spad good-man,
In the self place passe and delbe if ye can:
Where that ye thought the water first up-spang,
There shall ye finde within a space not lang,
An hürd of gold that samin hole within.
Shall make you rich for ay and all your kin,
So did this man as the young bairn commandit,
And as he said, this man right so he fand it.
Then cast this man to this young child again,
And thought he would reward him for his paine,
And offered him a pound of readie gold,
Which by no way receiue from him he would;
And said good-man, no gold I will receaue,
But pray for me at you no more I craue.
The seven Pastors perceiuing all this thing,
How a young child of years being so ying:
With such wisdome the mans dreame did expone,
Said to themselves, we marvell who is poue.
Of so young years makes such interpretation,
And then therefore takes neither gold nor crown,
So at this child these seven inquire the name:
He said, Merling, whereof I think no shame.
Quoth they your name b2ok well with all wel far
We perceiue well ye haue wisdome and lare,
A great matter we haue to you to know,
Of the which few or none but we do shou.
Then said the child, shew me forth your intent,
And ye shall haue answer incontinent.
Quoth the young child, this is the very case,
A maladie holds the Emperours grace:

The seven Sages.

So long as he in his palace will bide,
And not thereout neither to gang nor ride:
He sees as well as one that eber was,
But as soon as he from his palace passe:
There takes him then so great a maladie
That all about a stime he may not see:
And if ye can the cause hereof discusse,
First ye shall have a great reward of us;
And secondly remead if ye can finde.
In time comming the Emperour be not blind,
Out of his palace when he pleases to passe,
He will geve you reward what ye will ask.
Then said the childe, his maladie I know,
Als the remead thereof I can him show.
The Passers said, we pray you right heartly,
Passe with us seven, and bear us companie
While we come to the Emperours presence,
Where ye shall have reward and reverence.
Then said the childe, sirs, I am readie now,
Passe when ye please, and I shall go with you,
And so all eight incontinent pass hence:
While they came to the Emperours presence,
And when they came unto the Emperour,
They halssed him with reverence and honour:
And said, good Lord, sundry lands have we sought,
To get your health and here we have you brought
A good young childe, that knows your maladie,
At your pleasure will find help and supplie
In time comming that ye shall weil perceave,
Your dayly health, and no sicknesse to have.

The seven Sages.

Neither in one nor in another part,
He hath such wit in good cunning and art.
The Emperour unto these Masters said,
Of your tythance I am right wonder glaid,
All that he sayes, will ye seven take on hand?
Yea, sir said they, at that same we will stand:
For we have seen by good experience,
His great wisdom, craft, and intelligence.
The Emperour then unto the bairne he said,
Since such a thing good childe is to you laid,
The cause thereof at you I would inquire:
And soon my health heartly then I desire.
Then said the childe, and please your noble Grace,
We two alone must talke a little space,
In your chamber I shall you shew truly,
The cause of all your great infirmity.
And when he was into the chamber led,
He caused cast off the clothes of the bed:
Which into hast the Emperour canse be done,
My Lord he said, now here ye shall see soon
A marveilous thing, which you heard never tell,
Under the bed there was a mækle Well:
Of which there rose a foule smock and a reek,
That would have made a man both blind and sick.
Out of this Well there sprang seven great springs
The Emperour then he marvelled of such things,
Under his bed to be, and he not wist,
So great a Well, so foule a reek and mist.
He said my Lord, here plainly ye may see,
The very cause of your infirmite.

Without

The seven Sages.

Without ye put these springs and Well away
To get your sight again no way ye may,
The Emperour said, I pray you to me tell,
The nearest way for to undo this Well.
Then said the child, there is no way but one,
If it please you on force it must be tane.
The Emperour said, I pray you right heartly,
Shew me the way if such a thing may be:
Gold nor goods on no wise will I spare,
So that the truth to me ye will declare:
If mans craft, his naturall wit or might,
Perfect cunning, with good science or sight,
Subtile ingins, art, or experience
Might help my sight, or therefore finde defence,
I would not care for to give gold plentie,
Spare for no cost, so that ye cause me see
Without my place as well as I do in,
So your reward from me well shall ye win
How sith your Grace to me hath given credence,
I shall you shew by good experience:
The very truth: these seven springs ye see spring
Out of this Well, they are none other thing,
But the same seven Masters by their science:
Whom to ye gave so firme and great credence:
Which by their craft, cunning and enchantment,
You to make blind, this Well they did invent,
That from hence forth both you and your Empire,
Long time bygone have ralde at their desire.
About your place have ever made you blind,
To that effect that no fault ye should finde,

Done

The seven Sages.

Done any way by them or their consent,
That their great guile should not be made patent:
For hear complaints of your barons and lordes:
But they alone to agree such discords.
For that justice should reigns into your land,
But all such things should ly into their hand:
And your subjects to spoile every day,
All that was given to you it should seem gray,
Ye not seeing, now should they all be dead:
For your blindnesse they can finde no remead.
The Emperour said, now have ye to me shewn,
Of my blindnesse the cause and made it known:
Now the remead thereof I would ye sand,
Ye shall not want both gold, lordship, and land,
And please your Grace now to you shall I tell,
The verie truth will ye do my counsell:
Of your blindnesse if ye desire remead.
The first Paster take and strike off his head,
Then shall ye see the first spring of the Well
Be quite away: this is the truth I tell,
So orderlie while they be each one slaine:
And so ye shall recure your sight again.
This being done, the Well away shall went,
And so at ease ye shall get your intent:
Which in good haile was done as they thought right
And so again the Emperour got his sight,
And the young child rewarded right richlie,
Made him a lord, and heire of a countrie.
Then said the lord, have ye perceived this tale,
That I have shewn for your good and abaile.

The seven Sages.

He said right well, and thanks you hartfully,
For that good tale that ye have told to me.
In the same sort these seven Masters said the,
Unto your Grace they purpose for to do,
By their false tales and such like fainzeing.
That your curst son may ay aboue you reigne,
Which God defend ay while the houre I die,
That I never another Emperour see:
This tale (quoth he) I shall make to you clear,
What that it means, & please your grace to hear:
He said, say forth, ye shall have audience,
And commanded echone to keep silence.

The declaration of the Em- presse fourth tale.

This flowing Well of your son is the signe,
The seven springs are his Masters wunning
Which Well right soon can not destroyed be,
Except ye first cause the seven Masters die:
This being done the Well so shall ye waste,
Cause slay your son of this ye give me traist:
So Well and springs fra they destroyed be.
Then may ye have all at tranquillite:
Your whole Emprze well into peace and rest,
Forsooth (quoth he) Madame I think that best:
Incontinent then gave he strait command,
To the gallous to lead his son fra hand:
Down thzough the stræt officers him led,

The seven Sages.

One Master came, and at the spurs him sped,
To the Emperour with all good reverence;
Whom to he said, passe swith from my presence,
For the good send that ye have sent to me:
Ye serbe all seven on gallous so; to die,
I send you seven my son right well speaking,
Now he is dumb, and als can do nothing:
But only one, this thing I most detest,
By violence my Queen he would opprest.
Wherefore reward ye serbe nothing of me,
But ye all seven with him should hanged be,
The Master said, I serb'd a better thing
As my reward; no; on gallous to hing.
Where your grace sayes that now your son is dumb
God knows the cause, the time is not yet come,
Of his speaking the time will come at short:
Therefore I pray your grace to take comfort.
And ye shall se the time approach right near,
That he shall speak which all this place may hear
As to your Queen in that place where ye tell,
It is not proven, no; neither is gospel,
No; for the words of a singular person:
Without more profit your son should not put down
And if ye do for the words of your wife,
But good knowledge from your son take the life
It shall be worse with you I dare well say,
When chande a man and a wife on a day,
Which I shall shew to you by narration:
And prove the same by good probation.
The Emperour said, trow ye to do with me

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So

The seven Sages.

As seven Masters did once in this citie
With their false tales unto their native king.

Pay, nay, not so, it shall not be that thing.

The Master said, The fault of one or two
Should not redound to rebuke, blame or wo:

Of all others, for it is right well kend,

Both good and ill is to the worlds end,

But of a truth one thing I shall you shaw.

Put ye your son to death for your wishes saw,

It shall you chance as did this hinder year,

Unto a knight, if ye please ye shall hear.

The Emperour said, I pray you shew me right
What thing became or chanced that same knight.

The Master said, again your son cause call,

So to the death that he no wise be thral,

And keep him still, my tale while I have told,

Then your own will ye have even as ye would.

When I have done then take your own pleasure,

I will do so then said the Emperour,

And so his son again he canoe them cam,

As for that pay he should not thole the law,

So this Master his example began:

And told his tale forth like a cunning man:

But yet his tale etc we further forth set,

The Queens last tale we will not yet forget.

MORALITAS.

See the conceit of this bold bitter Bitch,

This red Revard, and this ranck warloch Witch

This traitour thief, this tryed Termigant.

So faine a fault as she would finde and fitch:

Vnto

The seven Sages.

Vnto these seven so reverent and rich.
In sweet science, farund, and fluctuant:
For they of wit nor wisdom nor does want,
To the black devil I the therefore beteach,
With him remaine in house an hells sanct.

Father of falset, and false flatterer,
A Gyre-carling, and gracelesse clatterer
Leadstar of lyes, and a great stop of feel,
A proud Princeesse, a pridefull parterer,
Mixt with malice, and a maine murderer.
A wood wild care, that never will do well,
Crop of curstnesse, and a quick ganging Deil:
Boot of unrule, and brewar of all bail,
Thou art too bold to forge so false a tale.

Not one word true thereof, but fained fair,
Too peart thou art to make such a compar:
Of the Masters, whereof that now speak we,
To the Emperour I know they did no more,
But that his son they had in the lare,
And had not been their cunning and clergie,
They had been dead, and likewise so had he,
Therefore thou art but a Loch of unlawrie,
A shameles threw the matter, devil morsskald thee.

Yet in her tale is some morality,
How God dispones his grace so plentifully,
To old, to young, to rich, and to the poor:
Some wit, some strength, some fairnesse with beauty
Some at their will have riches and plenty,
To diverse craftes some give their basie cure:
Howbeit to some hid things be, right obscure,
As was this bairn who spake this prophecie,
To seven Doctours in science was so sure.

How

The seven Sages.

Howbeit he was in youth and tender age,
God of his grace had given him more knowledge,
In wit, science, hid with subtilitie:
Nor to these seven whom this Queen doth alledge
Into her tale inferred upon foolage.
Who caused the Emperour again to see,
And knew the cause of his infirmity:
None exception there is of personage:
In sight of God he gives his grace so free.

Howbeit this childe in tender years was ying,
The very truth yet he shew to the king,
What was the cause of all his maladic,
And how the Well under his bed did spring.
And how these springs could him to blindness bring
Which was not known but to this child truly,
Whereby we may perceave for verity,
The grace of God is gotten for nothing:
Who list it to seek with all humility.

Now in bigging some takes so great pleasure,
While at the last bigges himself to the door:
Some brings a staffe for to break his own head,
Even so ye see these Doctours took labour,
To bring this childe unto the Emperour.
Whom through he got of his sicknesse remead,
But by this child causde them all seven thole dead,
It is oft seen, I say thee dearly brother
That every swick oft times beswicks another.

These seven Doctors whereof now speaks our Queen
As she infers, they have all traitours been,
Who devysed the Kings infirmity,
By traitourie, hid, holden, and unseen!
To be guiders of his Realme they did mean.

And

The seven Sages.

And have thereof the whole authoritie:
But no wise so of our Masters mean we,
For they did not but as they were desired,
By the Emperour, and his counsell required.

Therefore the Queen she should no credence have,
She is a sēp of sorrow to deceave,
A menslesse monster, a mirrour of mischance,
A patent port to ill ye may perceave:
A thriflesse thing when she begins to rave,
Full of deceat with fained false pleasance,
A town trattlar, to bring home evill rythance,
A mane truiour, an talker out of tone,
And shall forthink her talk ere all be done.

A reproach to the emperesse for her tale.

O Fragil flesh, with flattery ever senyeis,
A kingdom thou wouldst quell; thou grounder of glonyis
We shall hold in thy renyeis, because thou ravest unrocked,
And check you into chenyis, up by the chafts choocked:
Ov'r long ye have us mocked but yet the day will come
Your culum shal be knocked, when he speaks that is dumb

The tale of the fourth Master.

Vpon a time there was an elderyng knight,
Wise and wittie, full of riches and might,
Had liued forth many dayes of his life,
Without children, leinman, or married wife.
Diverse times his friends came him untill,
To see if it was his pleasure and will,

The seven Sages:

To sake a wife, and bairnes for to forth bring,
Throughe their counsell he granted to such thing:
So at the last they gotte his wife to be,
The probests daughter of that same city:
Which was right rich, well favoured and faire,
Well made at will, and was her fathers air:
For he her saw, he was so fane in love,
That he from her his heart could not remove:
Though love & favour betwixt them might be seen,
Yet all their space no bairnes was them between.
Unto the church as she past throughe the strate,
With her mother she hapned for to meet,
Either other hailed with great gladnesse,
And so began to talk in merrinesse.
The mother said, my daughter tell me how
Ye please your spouse, or how he doth to you?
She said, right ill, I am not with him content,
For he is old, feeble and impotent.
When ye me stalked upon so old a stick,
I would but doubt ye had hurged me quick:
For ere I come with him in naked bed,
To be drowned I had rather be led,
Or ly with swine, ere I lay by his side,
My flesh it ngs when that I touch his hide:
Hold me excusde I pray you heartly, mother,
For it is force that I must have another.
The mother said, my good daughter and dear,
Here I thee pray such foolishnesse forbear:
With your father many yeares I have been,
Such thing of me was never heard nor seen,
Other

The seven Sages.

Mother (she said) of that no marvell is,
 For ye two met in youth, heed, joy, and blis,
 And so eachone together had solace,
 It is not so with me into that cace.
 Ere I him got, ye know his strength was gone,
 He lyes as still beside me as a stone:
 For he is weak, old, cold, wasted, and drie,
 And as ye know, mother, so am not I:
 But in my flowrs of youth-hood blooming green,
 Compare therfore is not us two betwæn.
 Of his body I can get no solace,
 To me therfore it is an heaue cace.
 She said daughter, if such thou hast in minde,
 And to solage thine heart is so inclynde:
 Tell me thy minde without faining in brest,
 Whom wilt thou love? (quoth she) mother, a Priest.
 The mother said, if such thou wouldst desire,
 I think lesse sin to love a noble Squire:
 Or a gay knight, nor a Priest to thy love
 She said, mother, therein I you repowe:
 If that I lov'd a knight, or yet a squire,
 Within short time of my love they would tyre:
 And tell ov'r all into their merrinesse,
 And so me shame to my great lightlinesse,
 It is not so, ye know with men of kirk:
 For with wisdom and wylinesse they wike,
 And are as loth their honestie to tyme,
 In such affaires as I would do to mine,
 And counsel keep as quietly unshamed,
 As ye or I with our spouse would be blamed,

Also

The seven Sages.

Also kirk men are moze kind to their lobes,
Then others are, and so the practick probes.
She said daughter, hear my good counsell now,
And it shall be a good profit for you.
Old men (ye know) are wonder cantelous,
Wylie and fell, and right outragious:
In one manner ye shall your husband praebe,
Him for to tempt, or anger him, or grieve:
Then if ye scape but reproue or smiting
Lobe whom ye please at your list and liking,
The daughter said, so long I may not bide,
In all good haste a lobe I must prohibe:
God hath me sent founhappy a welro
That I can get no solace in this erd:
And ye your self mother als well ye ken,
What ill occurs to want pleasur of men:
I had rather drink water for a year,
Then I so long pleasure of men forbear.
The mother said, daughter, for my blessing,
Bide while thou probe, or tempt him wosome thing
For your blessing (she said) I will do mate,
But him to probe I pray you to declare,
In what fashon, or what way it may be,
She said daughter, that shall I hastily.
In your Orchard there is a tre that stands,
The mark thereof they say is in felo-lands,
In which your spouse hath gteat lobe and liking,
Awaite some day when he goes to the hunting,
Cause the same tre incontinent to be cuttit.
And bring it home ere ever your husband wit it:

Thereof

The seven Sages;

Whereof make fire against his coming hame,
Then if ye scape without reproche or blame,
At your pleasure then may we take the Priest,
This ye will do for your mothers request.
She said, mother, your counsell I will do,
Howbeit in truth I am right loth thereto.
Each one home past unto their own ludging,
The knight marvelled of his wifes taryng:
She said, Good sir, as I went West the street,
With my mother on chance there could I mete:
She asked me if ye were in gladnesse.
I said, even so, and then home did me dresse,
After dinner the knight went in hunting,
But his good wise thought on another thing:
And thought that her purpose should come to end,
Incontinent for the Gardner he send.
Whom to she said, cut down this tender tree,
That I thereof may make on bastille:
A great warme fire against my Lords coming,
He will with speed come home from the hunting,
This day is colde, so wonder sharp and cold,
And as ye know he is feeble and old:
When he comes home, that he shall not want fire,
Therefore cut down, and ye shall have your hire.
To whom he said, save your pleasure Madame,
Cut we this tree, but doubt we shall get blame:
For your husband far better loves this tree,
Ten times over then all the trees here be:
But not the lesse, Madame at your desire,
Other fallen wood I shall get to make fire.

The seven Sages.

Whereof my Lord, quoth he, will stand consent,
 Nay, may, said she, cut down incontinent.
 He said, As may this tree I will destroy,
 For it will put my Master to great noy.
 She hearing that he would not it command,
 The Gardners are she hint into her hand.
 The tender tree she cutted at the root,
 That from henceforth it should never have fruit:
 Caused servants the samine home to bear,
 Of her husband thereof taking no fear.
 The knight at night from hunting coming home,
 Hunting the wilde in forrest with the tame.
 His wife him met, and said, Good sir, I knate
 Ye are wearie, and wonder cold with aw:
 I can be to big to you a fire therefore,
 To make you cherie, and merrie be the more.
 I thank you Dame, said he, with all mine heart,
 Get I good chear then ye shall have your part:
 Then in he came, and sate down on a bink
 Before the fire, and cride to get him drink,
 Which in all haste to him right soon was brought,
 And right gladly thereof in minde he thought.
 In the mean time the small percoived hee
 Of the young plant, and best belov'd tree:
 To him he calls the Gardener right soon,
 And said, Pishant, what hast thou to mee done?
 Well I perceiue my plant burn in the fire,
 Therefore at mee thou hast not ser'd thine hire.
 He said, My Lord, it is true that yee tell,
 None did that turn but your own wife her self.

The seven Sages.

When said the knight, I know that cannot be,
 That mine own wife would do such thing to me:
 For well shee knew that tree I loved best,
 By twentie fold then I lov'd all the rest:
 I know she would never consent thereto,
 Because she knew that it was not my will.
 She said, Good Lord, I cry you here merrie,
 For it was I that cutted down the tree,
 Knowing right well yee were wearie, for gone,
 Cold, weak, and tirde, and good fire had we none:
 And I did it your courage to refresh,
 To make you blith, and to comfort your flesh,
 That was the cause this fire I could do to make,
 Only for you, and for none others sake.
 When the knight heard it was the same tree,
 Unto his wife he said right angerly,
 O wicked wife, how durst thou be so bold
 To cut the tree, that I on no wise wold
 Should be cut down for great riches and rent,
 I make a vow god shall it sore repent:
 And knowing well I lov'd it all the best,
 Thou hast me made a fault right manifest.
 When that she saw her husband discontent,
 When she began to weep, and to lament,
 On fained sort her self for to excuse,
 At suchlike time as women often doe,
 Sir I did it for your utilitie,
 And you it take again too crabbedly:
 For I believ'd to win therethrough good deed,
 And now I get great malogrie to my need:

For

The seven Sages.

For if that I do ever for the best,
A reuen reward I get ay readiest:
I had rather bee burnt into a cole,
Than for good minde such outrage for to thole.
Then she began to weep, and make mourning,
Incontinent the knight that perceiuing:
And at so short was moved with mercie,
And said, My soy, your mourning now let bee:
In time coming see that you not mee move
To displeasure, nor butt the thing I love:
Wherefore beware the dayes of your lifetime,
That neuer again you commit such a crime:
As for this time so I forgive you cleen,
Cease, weep no more, be still, and dye your pen.
Then the next day she went to church again,
Met her mother, whereof she was right fain:
Good morn mother, quoth she, with heart and brest,
Now well enough, saith I may love the priest:
And I have done even as you counseld me,
Mine hands cut down his best beloved tree:
So your counsell I did into all thing:
But fra befaw that I made much mourning,
Hee cherishe me, and hath forgiven me quite,
Wherefore mother, put me not in the wite,
Howbeit I love the priest with all mine heart,
For my good man he keeps me now part.
The mother said, Though old men once forgive,
In time coming after theye them will greve,
They will truely paine the heart saite again,
And punish if perchance with double pain.

The seven Sages.

My counsell is, tempt him another time,
 Alas mother, quoth she, I may not bide:
 For I suffer more pain for you same priest
 Than I can show, or think into my brest,
 Appardone mee my sweet mother therefore,
 Of your counsell now I will take no more.
 The mother said, for the love ye should have
 To mee, because my cozle did the conceive
 In my bosome, as a babe did the bear,
 And for the blessing of thy father dear,
 In this behalf yet tempt him once again.
 If you get quite, then I forgive you plain
 To love the priest, or any that ye please.
 She said, What tale to mee doth great dislike,
 From my pleasure for to remain so long.
 Forsooth mother ye are far in the wrong:
 Nevertheless for my fathers blessing
 Yet once again I shall give him tempting.
 How it shall be first ye must to mee show.
 All the fashion I pray you let mee know.
 Your husband hath (quoth she) a little bound,
 He will not come for many mark and pounnd:
 He loves so well, that nightly in his bed
 He makes his couch, and with fine meat is fed:
 With your own hands let ye the same bound kill
 Before his eye, so he may wit right well.
 This being done, be ye not punisht than
 To love the priest, or any other man,
 I give you leave, I shall you never blame,
 So it be not to your great sin and shame.

Shd

The Ieven Sages.

Shee said, Mother, I will your counsell do
At this present what ye will charge me to:
For there is not a bairn I wot livand,
So fain would keep of mine age the command
Of her parents, and now withouten skaith,
I will obtain the blessing of you baith.
And now mother, remember in your thought,
For your blessing I do, else would I nought:
And then she said, O ye sweet mother adew,
What thought I have, I pray God if ye knew:
Then came she home, and put off as she might
That longsome day, while it came to the night:
And so at night commanded that her bed
With purple cloathes, and silk should be overlaid,
Which the servants at her command hath done,
With costly cloathes the bed they spread it so: as:
And when the bed was thus at readie made,
The little hound thereon hath him down laid:
As his custome it was, and consuetude,
As the good wife knew well that he would dudge:
And up she rose with minde malicious,
With hatefull heart, and full right venemous,
By the heind heils this hound then she did take,
And all his harms out on the wall she strake,
Saying, What devil doth this tike on our bed,
That is so rich, and all with silk overlaid.
When the knight saw his little hound was slain,
From crabednesse no wayes he could refrain:
But to his wife with angrie heart can say,
Wicked woman, out of my sight away,

Wote

The seven Sages.

My counsell is, tempt him another time,
 Alas mother, quoth shee, I may not bide:
 For I suffer moze pain for you same priest
 Than I can show, or think into my brest,
 Appardone mee my sweet mother therefore,
 Of your counsell now I will take no more.
 The mother said, for the love ye should have
 To mee, because my cozle did the conceive,
 In my bosome, as a babe did the bear,
 And for the blessing of thy father dear,
 In this behalf yet tempt him once again.
 If you get quite, then I forgive you plain
 To love the priest, or any that ye please.
 Shee said, What tale to mee doth great displease,
 From my pleasure for to remain so long.
 Forsooth mother ye are far in the wrong:
 Nevertheless for my fathers blessing
 Yet once again I shall give him tempting.
 How it shall be first ye must to mee shew.
 All the fashion I pray you let mee know.
 Your husband hath (quoth she) a little bond:
 He will not cost for many mark and ponne:
 He loves so well, that nightly in his bed
 He makes his couch, and with fine meat is fed:
 With your own hands let ye the same bound kill
 Before his eyes, so he may wit right well.
 This being done, be ye not penitnt then,
 To love the priest, or any other man,
 I give you leave, I shall you never blame,
 So it be not to your great sin and shame.

Sh

The Ieven Sages.

Shee said, Mother, I will your counsell do
At this present what ye will charge me to:
For there is not a bairn I wot liband,
So fain would keep of mine age the command
Of her parents, and now withoutten skaith,
I will obtain the blessing of you bairn.
And now mother, remember in your thought,
For your blessing I do, else would I nought:
And then shee said, O ye sweet mother adew,
What thought I have. I pray God if ye knew:
Then came she home, and put off as she might
That long some day, while it came to the night:
And so at night commanded that her bed
With purple cloathes, and silk should be overspied.
Which the servants at her command hath done,
With costly cloathes the bed they spied it so: as:
And when the bed was thus at readie made,
The little hound thereon hath him down laid:
As his custome it was, and consuetude,
As the good wife knew well that he would dudge:
And up she rose with minde malicious,
With hatefull heart, and bult right venemous,
By the heind heils this hound then she did take,
And all his harness out on the wall shee strake,
Saying, What devil doth this tike on our bed,
That is so rich, and all with silk overspied.
When the knight saw his little hound was slaine,
From crabednesse no wayes hee could refrain:
But to his wife with angrie heart can say,
Wicked woman, out of my sight away,

Wote

The seven Sages.

How could thou finde into thy cruell minde,
To slay the hound that to me was so kinde?
And over all hounds with mine heart was lobed,
O wicked wife, I abhorre himself the mobed
To do such thing, and me to be increase,
O curst catibe, wo to thy cruelnesse.

She said, Good-man, have ye not right well sen,
How this fowl fyke with his feet so unclean
Upon our bed hath lye and seld the same?

Have ye pleasure thereof, or any game,
Fowl traiked rykes upon our bed to lye
Though ye please so the same yet please not I,
To spill our bed that is so precious,
Covered with cloathes so clean and curious,
With his foul feet new come out of the mire,
I rather burn the bed and all in fire.

When said the knight with an angrie visage,
I knew thou not well that I had great courage
Into a leish mine hound so to see led,
An hundzed times, then lying in my bed.

I rather given all mine horse where they stand,
Ere ye had such wicked deed in hand.

Then when she saw the knight so discontent,
And in some part raised in matalent,
To weep and wall in all haste she began,
Saying, Alas that ever I knew a man:

For when I was into my virgins flowrs,
I knew nothing of such sharp winter showrs,
For any tyke on such sort to be shored,
Quick in my grave I had rather bee smored:
For all that I so the best do pretend,

The seven Sages.

See ay alleadge that therein I offend:
Howbeit my minde be ever true and good,
I get no thanks, this shortly I conclude.
When this old knight perceiving the great care,
Weeping, mourning, with ruthfull heart and sare,
As he beheld's: he said, let be such thing,
And at this time ye make no more mourning:
I pardon you under protestation;
In time coming ye make no such occasion.
See so to move to anger and to ire,
For if ye do at sometime I will fire:
We know right well ye chided down my tre,
And now at last ye have cause mine hound die.
Do not such like I heartly you desire,
For if ye do no more I can forbear;
To punish you for all that is gone by,
To the uttermost, remember well say I:
Therefore beware, make mee not discontent
At you no more, and so to bed they went.
So on the morrow at time up soon the rose,
With merrie minde, and put on all her cloathes,
Went to the hirk, and to her mother met,
Beloving well of her good leave to get;
To love the priest, and fild her husbands bed,
But (as God would) such thing was nothing sped:
They had so other, as they thought to bee done,
And in talking they fell together soon.
He said, another, too long for your request
I have the love so lated of the priest:
For now I have tempted mine husband twice,

Hanged

The seven Sages.

Hanged be I tohen that I tempt him thysse:
 By your command a great thing I habe done,
 By my conceit many Sages abone:
 For (as ye habe) I cutted down his tree,
 And now lately I can be his good hound die:
 And both these faults he hath forgiven me quite,
 In time coming to me ye put no wite:
 With all mine heart and minde with his my brest
 In all good haffe I will go lobe the prest:
 The mother said, I pray you daughter dear
 With patience two woys as thou wouldest me hear,
 It is known with me then I can tell,
 That old men are ay right sie and cruelle,
 And will think on upon faults done before,
 Howbeit some time they will not chide nor chide:
 For it is said, and als right well I wote,
 That cruelty is ay appropiate:
 To eld in knights, that in youth habe been keen,
 That in their eld they turn to tray and teent:
 And for some faults will punish with rigour,
 As they in minde it take in displeasure:
 Yet my counsell therfore I would thou do,
 And thereafter I shall thee not forbid,
 Lobe where thou likes, or whom thou likes to lobe,
 There is mine hand I shall thee not repove:
 Yet tempt him once, as we can best devise,
 For it is said, All things othe be but thysse.
 She said, Mother, I hear you talk in vain,
 I new ye the thought, and nightie burning pain
 That I suffer continually in heart,

The seven Sages.

I wote y^e would not take my contrare part:
 Y^e were mother, a woman as I am,
 What would y^e say, if y^e wanted the game
 Of my father, that nightly you do break,
 For a new love but doubt soon would y^e lack,
 With all your pith the same y^e would purchase,
 And have the same with all your businesse:
 Into this case now put your minde to rest,
 To love the purest good faith I think it best.
 She said, Daughter, for the great pain and cure
 I had of thee that time when I thee bare:
 And for the sorrow thereof which that thee fed,
 I thee beseech file not thine husbands bed,
 While the third time, I pray thee him to prove,
 As thou wilt have my blessing and my love:
 Deny me not this sober small petition,
 And I promise thee here a sure condition,
 I shall forth set and further thine intent
 To thy pleasure and als intendment:
 And never say that thou hast done amiss,
 My sweet daughter I pray thee grant me this,
 As thou wilt have my blessing on thy bones,
 My small desire I pray thee grant me ones.
 The daughter said, Mother, I you declare,
 The matter is to mee so sad and rare,
 That I may not so long absent therefore,
 Yet not the lesse so inwardly y^e pray,
 For the great charge first that y^e say to me,
 And then again y^e have promise truly
 Into this case to further forth my cause.

The seven Sages.

If I had need the righteous God it knowes:
Wherefore shew me the manner and the way,
How I shall tempt him to the third essay.
The mother said, On Sunday next command,
I know right well the minde of your husband,
To have us all to dine is his intent,
With many friends, that none there be absent,
With diverse good men of this citie,
Then when ye are at all your Majestie,
With all your meates well served at the table,
At the board head to sit ye are right able:
A key ye shall onto the board-cloath knit,
Which at your belt doth hing, not latching wit
That ye bid so, but that it comes by chance,
Saying, plaseforth with a fair countenance
Ye may perceive so forgetfull a wife
As I am now I trust be not on life:
In my chamber my knife I have so yet,
Force I must rise the same again to get:
Then shall ye rise with a saire hastily,
No man knowing where that ye knit your key:
So being knit into the board-cloath fast,
Then all the meat and table down ye cast:
On this fashion all your meat shall be spilt,
With displeasure, and all your naprie gilt:
Ye doing so, unpunisht if ye bee,
To lobe the priest saith here I make you free.
She said, For once your counsell shall I prieve,
But never again so long as I may live:
For your counsell I have done far o'r might,

And

The seven Sages.

And so either at other took good night:
Within few dayes the feast was prepared
Abundantly, and so; no cost they spared:
The father, mother, and friends of honestie
On every side was called there to bee:
The table covered and all set down to dine,
The meat is come right delicate with wine:
All being set, as it could best effect,
The good-wife cryd each man to make good cheer:
At the board-head she set her own self down,
Her mother perceivd well the fashion
What her daughter would do, right well she knew,
Believing well the same that she would do.
So the good-wife a bonelittle key,
Hang at her belt, she knit right quietly
That none perceiv'd, nor knew her ill intent,
But thus she said to all that was present:
If I be wise, now may ye all perceive,
In my chamber my knife so; got I have,
Which I must fetch, and with a faire apse,
And with a tit took with her the bed-cloathes:
The table tird, and all the meat down flang,
Alas, she said, faith now I have done wrong:
I soze repent that I so shortly rose,
The meat is spilt, and spild are all the cloaths:
The knights colour changed into his face,
And smilde so; scorn that so occurd the case:
And suffered over with dissimulance,
To treat his guests with a fair countenance,
And commanded a new table be set,

With

The seven Sages.

With new naprie, and other courtes get,
And prayde his guests for to be blith and glad,
Howbeit his table was recklesly down laid:
Incontinent fresh meats was brought anone,
To new dinner with gladnesse are they gone:
For all things done, not moving him nothing,
And to his wife an ill word not saying,
Making good chear to all the companie,
With merrynesse, welcomming them gladly.
But the mother knowing well the intent
Of her daughter, was wonder discontent.
The dinner done, they thanked all the knight,
And als his wife, and bade them both good night.
On the next morn the knight he early rose,
In name of God then to the kirk he goes:
And after he had his devotion done,
He a barbour but tarie he pass soon,
Saying, Passer, ye are goodly expert
In blood lettring, or insight in that art.
He said, Good Sir, I am expert truely
Of every beine within a mans bodie,
I know right well, or yet in a woman,
In drawing blood thereof great craft I can.
Then said the knight, thereof I am content,
Come on with me, and ye shall have payment:
So the barbour home with the knight he went,
And by the way he told him his intent:
And so they came unto the knights lodging,
Where his wife lay soon they got entering.
He said, Good dame, get up, for ye must rise.

Quoth

The seven Sages.

Quoth she, Good sir, for with its not the guile
So soon to rife, say ye that for a mock,
It is as yet scarce nine houres of the clock?
When said the knight, Rise up for your own good,
On both the armes ye must bee letten blood.
Shee said, Good sir, since my mother mee bare,
Blood of me yet was neber letten mare.
And now thereof since I want consuetude,
I have no will for to be letten blood.
When said the knight, Forsooth ye are the war
To let your blood so long that ye deser.
Think ye not on what fault ye have made me?
First ye helpe down my noble plant and tree,
Wherby ye knew well I loved all the best,
And then ye know how that mine hound ye drest:
And yesterday our friends being present,
At the table so cruelly ye me spent:
If I suffer that ye do the fourth wrong,
In consuetude and use so will ye gang:
Within short time ye shall me so constrain
To oute shame, that I can not refrain:
My self from shame, without I finde remead,
And I finde well some fault is in your head
Of corrupt blood, that must be letten out,
And als wilde blood in your body but doubt:
That from henceforth ye shall no more bear blame,
Nor anger mee, nor yet put me to shame.
We canloe servants but any more abade.
In the chamber a great fire to bee made,
She seeing that, she thought without remead

Into

The seven Sages.

Into that fire soe to be burnt to dead,
 When crye the lord, for Gods grace grant mercy,
 And I promise you one thing faithfully,
 In all my dayes I shall you never grieve,
 Sothis one time that yee will mee relieue,
 And haue pittie: I grant I did trespasse,
 Wherefoze god sit iudger of you I ask.
 When said the knight, By him that mercie made,
 Stretch ye not forth your arm but moze abade,
 Where I intend of your blood to haue part,
 I shall haue all the heart-blood of your heart.
 To the Barbour also hee said in plain,
 See that yee cut a great hole in the brain,
 Or by Saint George the same thing yee shall haue
 For your reward that she should now receiue.
 The Barbour seeing he got so soze a charge,
 He made a wound that was both deep and large,
 On that one arm, while that the blood ran down
 Abundantly, and with great effusion:
 Which soe to wanch the knight would nothing thole
 But rather haue moze larger make the hole,
 Untill the time he saw her change colour,
 That wound to wanch he charged the Barbour:
 And bade him strike into that other arm
 As great a wound, whereof he thought no harm.
 She said, Husband, haue mercie now on mee,
 I am so weak I trust I shal die.
 When said the knight, ye should haue thought on this
 Once, twice, and thrise, when yee committed this:
 Which causeth mee right soze against my will.

The seven Sages.

Of your wilde blood so much to see you spill:
 For I sure you haue libes not upon life.
 That would haue drawen so much blood of my wife.
 Except my self thereto had giuen consent,
 But doubt that one of us should sore repent.
 But at this time your own right wilfulnesse
 Hath caused mee on this maner you to see:
 For thou hast done to me wicked turnes thre,
 Wherefore but doubt now punisht must thou be.
 When the barbour cande her lay south on bread:
 That other arm, that he might cause her bleed:
 And then he strake upon the other side
 Into her arm a wound both deepe and wide,
 While that the blood abundantly ran down,
 That all belov'd that she should fall in swoon:
 With a weak voice she cride right pittiefully,
 My sweet husband haue pittie now on mee,
 For I beleeve because I am your wife,
 Yee covet not that I should lose my life.
 Then said the knight to the barbour againe,
 I thinke it best that yee now stanch yon vein:
 Now presently no more yee let it bleed.
 The barbour said, So shall I, sir indeed:
 That being done, the knight he gave command
 To his servants, that they should soon fetch hand:
 Put her in bed, that she might get some rest.
 The barbour said, Good sir I thinke it best.
 Then bade he her remember in her minde
 In time bygone how ill she was inclin'd:
 And misse amend, or I beht by the rood,

The seven Sages.

Do ye not so, I shall see your heart blood:
 When the Barbour at this good eldzing knight
 Reciv'd his wage, and at him took good night:
 When the servants in minds they thought it best,
 Their own hussie to put her to some rest:
 So in her bed they hapt her easlie,
 When they believ'd nothing but her to die:
 She being laid softly into her bed,
 Headie in heart, right saint, and all sozebled,
 A damsel all the while in all the haste
 Fetch her mother ere they peelded the Chaisse
 Who in all haste that to her mother said
 Your daughter soon the spirit shee will upgald:
 If yee come not, I say to you truelle,
 She is so saint, we trow all she shall die.
 When the mother inquired secretly
 What was the cause of her infirmittie?
 The damsel to her the fashion said,
 Whereof the mother was both blith and glad,
 That her daughter so trimly was corrected,
 Howbeit that she the famine not suspected:
 So on she came into her daughters place,
 To consider the fashion and the care:
 And as soon as she heard her mother speak,
 My sweet mother, said she, I you besek
 To let you down, and rest at my bed head,
 For I believe nothing but only dead,
 Of my bodie so much blood I have bled,
 That I on force behoved to take bed,
 Whzough verie fault and sozebleme of blood,

What

The seven Sages.

That of my life I know to be true,
 The mother said, My sweet daughter and dear;
 Told I you not a word was not in war,
 That of old men was sharp and bitter fell.
 Right outragious, despitefull, and cruel;
 Howbeit sometime a fault they may be free;
 Yet at the last they would it punish he.
 My daughter now a question I will pose;
 Howbeit ye be right were, and lying here,
 Tell me the truth, open to me your breast;
 In time coming is ye will love the priest say?
 Who said again, Mother, alas, let be;
 A worlds shame take all the priests for me;
 The high vengeance of the great God above;
 Not quell them all, ere I one of them love;
 But my husband that is both dear and sweet,
 There is no man in the world for me so meet.
 The mother said, Why should ye be despite
 At the poor priest, or give him any witte?
 For I beleve your minde he never knew;
 For in such case he did you not perswade;
 But well I know what thing was caused you done;
 The wantonnesse and abundance of blond,
 Which I beleve at this time now ye want,
 For ye behov'd have something you to dant.
 Mother, said she, I pray you let me rest,
 Above all men mine husband I think best.
 The Pastor then said to the Emperour,
 Sir, have ye tane this tale well in order?
 And considered thereof the morall sense,

The seven Sages.

The Emperour said, Master, by my conscience
It is the best and verie lyfull tale
That eber I heard this many years but false:
To her husband she do then shewd turnes true,
First she cutted this noble tender tree,
Then slew his hound, which was but a dumb beast,
And then thirdey misfashioned all his feast:
If hee had thold the fourth soz to been done,
It should have brought him to confusion soon.
The Master said, I counsell you heresore
Look to your wife, give her credence no more:
Slay ye your son soz her woords unoffended,
We shall sozethink when ye can no way mend it.
The Emperour said, I say to you truely
My son this day soz your sake shall not die.
The Master said, I thank your noble Grace,
That soz my sake hath pardond him such space:
So took his leave, as would him well esser,
And so homeward to his own house could spér:
Cre wee pzoceed now to the Emperesse tale,
Some wee will talk of the Doctors but saile.

MORALITAS.

YEE may perceave now by this tale,
Good counsell is of great avale,
Who that will take it well in head,
From vice to vertue it shall him lead,
And ay be rulde with a good reed,
This is forsuith but saile.

Good counsell is a precious thing
Higher to Emperour or to King,

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The seven Sages.

It lets nothing for to go wrang,
The King nor Emperour never rang,
Who if they want good counsell lang,
With rule they shall not ring.

All great perrils it sets aside,
With wisdom it doth all provide,
God it grants to all degrees,
But many so fast from it flees,
While they bee set upon their knees
They have no grace to guide.

This young woman had sore offended,
If her mother had condescended
To her daughters unwise conceit:
In her contrare she made debate,
And causde her go another gate,
Good counsell to defended.

The mother was great to allow,
That causde her daughter to her bow,
Through good counsell, once, twise, and thrise,
Saying, Daughter, see thou bee wise,
Take not in hand such enterprife,
Except thou it avow.

And so by counsell of her dame
Shee continued her glaiked game,
Howbeit she rang in ramping rage,
Good counsell causde her to asswage,
While that the Barbour for his wage
Made her meek as a lamb.

Say yee not but it was despite?
First cut the tree, the hound to smite,

M a

Then

The seven Sages.

Then cast the table so reckleslie,
How can shee well excused be,
Shee was witelesse a little wile,
Wantonneffe had the wite.

And heat of blood was abundant,
Whereof some part shee might well want,
Her husband then took well in head,
How hee thereof should get remead,
Where hot blood was hee laid cold lead,
And this wife could her dant.

So when her mother came to see,
Whether if shee would live or die:
Who said, Daughter for my request
Now lay thine hand to thine own brest,
And see if thou wilt love the Priest,
Cease mother, let that bee.

For had not been your good counsell,
But recure I had shamde my sell,
And as yee know I was right shra,
For all your sawes to come therofra,
Now thanks to God it is not fa,
Good counsell beares the bell.

The Priest of all this was witelesse,
Of my bawdrie and bruckleneffe,
For hee thereof never thing knew,
Nor I to him not such thing shew,
But was in purpose to pursew,
Therefore hee was fakelesse.

Young women herefore in your flowers,
Though yee think pride of paramours,

Take

The seven Sages.

Take here example how I am,
And set aside such lawlesse game,
Or yee shall fore repent the same,
The time was mine as yours.

Yee old men that are come to age,
Young women into marriage
In no manner is for you meet,
They are wanton and full of heat,
To you is sowre that they think sweet,
And skant to get for wage,

Therefore in time yee should correct them,
With aw and labour yee should break them,
Let them not brawl on every bink,
For as yee brow so shall yee drink,
Perchance have matter for to think,
And great cause to suspect them.

To this talking yee should take heed,
Or afterwards yee shall repent,
When yee are made *John Thomp* man,
Then shall yee brawl, then shall yee ban,
And when remead none finde yee can,
But all with shame overthent.

Now are yee warnde, I bid adew,
Wee are too good where wee are new,
There is too few is faithfull found,
Some cuts the tree, some kills the hound,
Some castes the table to the ground,
As I did that, I rew.

The seven Sages.

A praise to the fourth Doctour,

Laud, honour, praise, and thanks an hundred fold
To the Doctour, for the tale thou hast told,
That saved hath the childe's life for a day,
And quenched hath the Emperours bouſt ſo bold,
In great malice, who that but mercie would
His own ſon ſlain, but thou him cauſeſt ſay nay,
Though yon quick ſiend doth all that ever ſhe may
To have him ſlain, but wee ſhall all deſie her,
Within few dayes on red war wee ſhall cry her.

The declaration of the Em
preſſe fifth tale.

The Emprice hearing the child was yet not dead
A new conceit then took ſhe in her head,
Through all the town cauſe ſhe in ſundrie airts
The cartage horſe that wold draw wains & cairts;
And ſild the ſame with every ſort of gear,
Her ornaments and cloathes that ſhe ſhould wear,
Made her to paſſe unto her ſather's name,
Saying ſhe wold be longer ſuch ſuch name,
As ſhe did dayly, that all men might ſee,
And thereupon could not rebenged be:
Wherefore ſhe wold at her ſather ſeek mends,
Whom on the ſaid all her hope clean depends:
The ſervants ſo perceiving her intent,
To the Emprour they ſhe wold incontinent:
Who paſt in haſte to her but more proceſſe,
Inquird the cauſe of all ſuch buſineſſe:
Where make yee to? or whether will yee go?

em hat

- The seven Sages.

What is the cause that thou art moored so?
He saies, I will but any more delay
As my father the hie gate make the way,
Where I may haue both solace, mirth, and game,
But now I haue the contrarie of the same:
Therefore I must pursue where I may get it,
For at this time ye cause mee now forget it.
The Emperour said, will ye get more solace,
For bide with me: I trow into no place,
For I had hope there was no man on life
Was better lodg'd than I with his own wife.
Now I perceiue the very clean contrarie,
That bownes away in other places far.
He said, My Lord, for that cause I depart,
For I love you with so an perfect heart,
That I rather of your death for to tell,
Then be present, for to see it my self:
Of your Passers ye take far more delite,
To hear their tales all told in my despite,
That I am quite put forth of your credence,
Ye giue to them such inward attendance:
Therefore it shall chance you ere all be gane
Far worse then did unto O & viane,
Which this empire (as ye now presently)
Had for to guide, and died in miserie:
He was so false, and also so covetous,
That his subjects held him so odious:
They were constraind for his great fallacie
To eie him quick for all his dignitie,
Because each man so covetous did him hold,

They

The seven Sages.

They eat his mouth full of hot melted gold:
 To whom, quoth he, let no such thing be said,
 That of falsen the blame to mee be laid.
 She said, but doubt the blame lyes all on you,
 For day by day all time ye cause me sorrow,
 Your son should die, and yet he liuing is,
 And well ye know that he did a great misde:
 Therefore beleue that euermore from hence
 In that behalf I giue you no credence.
 The Emperour said, It becomes not a King
 Without counsell to discuss euer y thing:
 And in speciall for to giue judgement
 On mine own son without good aduisement.
 Therefore Madam, I pray you heartfully
 That ye would shew some example to mee,
 Wherethrough I may my realm to wisdom geue,
 And to my self an easie life procure.
 She said, I will some liue to you shew,
 Whereby ye may well and perfectly know,
 To rule your realme, and hold your self perfit,
 So ye will make yowr seven Sages quitte,
 Of their counsell you are too careless,
 And of their tales you are too despitous.
 Yet not the lesse my tale worth shall I say,
 But if ye please the sentence bear away.

BEfore our dayes there was both heard and seen
 Kings and Emperours into this town baryden
 Amongst the rest I remember on one,
 Which called was to name Octaviane

The seven Sages.

So covetous as hee was to win gold,
I never read one formed on the mold.
The citizens that time (as I heard say)
They had great wars with all about them lay,
And all nations right cruell y they danted,
Where they tributs or any manred wanted:
While that it come to such hote point of war,
That all nations in their confare did start:
In that mean time there was a Master-clark
Dwelling in Rome right cunning in his warck,
Called Virgil, the which in Arithmetick
He was so lie, that no man was found sick.
The citizens this Clark they did require,
That hee would worck and win from them good hire,
To finde some way by his craft and cunning,
For to ingrave some image or such thing
Of his practick, inghtie, or industrie,
Subtile science, or yet hecromancie,
Whereby that they might have perfect knowledge,
When enemies to warfare made voyage,
And to escheiw fight all edverlie,
And set foreward their own prosperitie.
Whereby they might provide their purveyance,
To good or ill together that it did chance.
The citizens then with this cunning Clark
Made one accord, and so fell to his warck:
Within the town hee builded up a towre
Of a great height, and als of great valour,
And set upon the famine towers head
Great images of tin, of brasse, and lead:

And

The seven Sages.

A great number by their own descriptions,
As many as is in the world regions,
In the midst of that famine towre of hight
A great image hee set to all mens sight:
And in the hand it bare a golden ball,
As it should be the master of them all:
And each one of the rest had by them sell
Into their hand a little ringing bell:
And turnd their face to the same region,
To them assignde, and took dominion:
If any realm and region up would rise
In contrarie Rome, by rebell any wise,
Then that image to any each region
It had respect of yet dominion,
Would move the face, and also ring the bell.
And them to warn it would not faile to tell.
Then the Romanes ere any loss mist
That rebellion they rose for to resist:
And armed them in all the seats of war,
As them became, or to them could afford:
And so small land there was in Christendome
But by that way was made subject to Rome,
Wherethrough they won great worship and honours
Over all the world they were cald conquerours.
This being done, this noble cunning clerk
In Romes town hee made another work,
Which was a fire continually burning
Both night and day, and never had flockning:
To the people being a great comfort,
Solace and mirth, blithnesse, and mekle sport:

Two

The seven Sages.

Two bathing sats he made within the towne,
To the commontie great consolation:
The one was cold, prepared for summers season,
The other hote for winter which was reason:
If any man his hodie would refresh,
Passe to the one, therewith he might him welch
Betwixt these bathes, and this continuall light
An image made of great stature and height,
With such engine so long as there it stood,
The fire should burn, and als the bathes do good:
In whose forehead were written letters fine,
Who strikes me down great treasure they shall fine
And more attout it may fall such a chance,
When they have done to take a great vengeance.
This image was made with such craftinesse,
Whyle that it stood, and tholed no distresse,
The fire lasted, and never more went out,
The twobathes stood in their own play but doubt,
Whyle at the last a cunning clark past by,
And this image perfectly could espie,
The writing read, and to himself he said,
What like vengeance can on a man be laid,
O; what treasure may any man now fine,
That strikes the down, or puts the to ruine?
But I beleve rather hid that there bee
Under thy feet some great summes of money:
Some rich Jewels of gold, or some treasure,
That thou art so set up with such honour:
This I beleve, and is the likeliest,
And so at short that image down he kest,

The seven Sages.

To that effect some treasure to obtain,
But none he got because none there had been:
But so soon as that image fell but doubt,
Incontinent the fire was quenched out:
The bathes two were banisht out of sight,
Did never good noz after had no might
The poeple hereof was very sorie
That they were so destitute of glozy:
Both of their bathes and of their lasting light,
Which of them did great comfort day and night;
Saying eachone with loud voice to the alre,
Curst mot he be soz now and ebermaire,
That us so quite of comfort hath made clein,
That we so long in consuetude hath been
Foz his pleasure and profit singular,
Who to him with sturt and meekle care :
Yet not the lesse there treasure got he none,
And our pleasure all quite away is gone.
In this moane time was living kings three,
To whom Romanes had done great villanie,
By great murther and malice them molest
With cruel wats and slaughter them opprell:
On whom they would right saine redenged been:
So to counsell these three kings did comen,
With their barons, their lozds, and their knights
And other men of great wiseboine and mights,
How that they might on Rome redenged be :
Foz their slaughter and their great villanie,
Unto them done in diverse tymes by went,
And could no wayes on them get asschmant.

When

The seven Sages.

When diuerse dayes they had at counsel been,
Some of them said, this abails not a p[re]ene:
Their might is far aboue all our puissance,
Therefore we think some other conueyance,
We must attempt, and new conceits consider,
Therefore let all our wits now go together.
Then foure old knights that was of counsell good,
Before these kings and Lords up they stood:
Saying these words, we think we work in vaine,
On this matter so long for to remain,
For truth it is, while their great towre upstands
With images and bells into their hands,
Which warnes them when any religion will rise
In their contrarie then passe they to devise
Remed therefore what land against them steeres,
With all defence and cruell feat of weers:
So we must run upon an other word,
Eschew the deep, and cast us to the sword.
Then said the kings what think ye best to do?
Quoth they, please ye our counsell to stand to:
So that ye will thereon to make the cost,
We shall you please or else our heads be lost.
Then said the kings, for cost do ye not spare,
Therefore ye shall be answered and far more.
Then said the knight, the matter standeth thus,
Octavian ye know is covetous,
And loveth gold (ye know) aboue measure:
Therefore he must be blinded with treasure,
The sight of gold will make him so inclin'd,
To all our sawes he hath gold so in minde:

Packed.

The seven Sages:

Packed full well foure punctions to the head,
Ye must furnish of coined gold so red,
With good convey, and orderly expence,
While that we get the Emperours presence.
This being done, get ye not your intent,
We shall all four tyme liues, goods, lands and rents.
The king said, Go to, it shall be done:
They made foreward, the gold was gotten soon:
Four full punctions of gold that was so bright,
To Romes town they brought within the night:
No man knowing what there within was closed,
To their purpose when they think them disposed:
These foure punctions in four sundry parts
In Romes town they hid at diuerse parts,
Some in full seas, in drowells, and in dikes,
Low in the earth, and some they sank in sikes.
This being done, they came right quietly
To their hostage, and lay down pryvely:
And on the morne at tyme of day they rose
With good intent, and to the palace goes:
And so helpe as they pass up the street,
It chanced them the Emperour so to meet,
They hailed him with reuerence as euerd,
Again at them right patiently he spærd
From whence they came, or what service could do,
To what science they were most able to:
Who answered him into their best manner,
From far countries to your grace commed here:
We are spa-men, soothsayers and diuiners,
To serbe your grace and als your counsellers,
And can discusse all dreames right cunningly,

The seven Sages.

And tell thereof the truth and veritie,
And all his gear that is put out of sight
We can it finde, and thereto go at right
By our own dreames, our crafts and als ingine,
Though it were his a thousand years syne:
And we have heard that your grace hath pleasure
In such behalves, and therein taketh cure:
And if your grace at us will such require,
We are ready to fulfill your desire,
By day or night into all kinde of sozt,
With heart and minde your grace soz to comfort.
The Emperour then considering in his minde
How these foure men to such things were inclinde,
And knew right well that into Romes citie
Great summes of gold was his right quyetly,
Whereof he could get no perfect knowledge,
Except such men as these he had in wage:
So covetise and greedinesse of gear
Hastie credence, which all men should soz bear,
Blinded his thought, and caused his wits surbey,
Caused him too soon to their bidding obey:
And so at short the Emperour is agreed
With these four men, and faithfully them sed,
Whom to he said, Good sirs, I will you probe,
And if ye be such men soz my behove,
As ye have said, ye shall have good reward,
Each one of you but doubt shall be a laird,
And intertaind with thanks into my house,
Amongst my lords, with gifts full glorious.
They said again, And please your Majestie,

The seven Sages

No more reward at your grace cometh mee,
 But the one half of it wee do obtaine,
 Under the earth as shall hee clearly see
 By our ingines, our dreams, and our foresights,
 Within few years we mean to mend our nights.
 The Emperour said, Go do as ye devise,
 Pee take on hand a wondrous enterprise.
 Then said they all unto the Emperour,
 This night, my Lord, if it be your pleasure,
 To the eldest of us for to grant liebes,
 His clean cunning this same night for to pricke,
 By his own dream what hee can comprehend,
 And what thereof shall be the final end:
 And thereafter wee shall into dayes three
 Shew to your grace thereof the veritie
 What it betokens, and what thereof shall come,
 To your pleasure ye shall know all and summe.
 The Emperour said, Go to, I am content,
 So took good night, and all foure forth they went,
 Merie in heart, right blith and very glad,
 So good answere that they obtained had.
 Past forth that time in scorn and derision,
 Believing well the great towe to get down,
 Thre dayes and nights being past, and all compleat
 These four kest them with the Emperour to meat.
 The eldest said, And please your noble grace
 To passe with us, and we shall shew the place
 Where that a tun of red gold lyeth hid.
 The Emperour said, I will do as ye bid.
 Then hastily they came unto the place,

The

The seven Sages.

The eldest said, And please your noble Grace,
As I beleve, there is of gold so clear
I run strackfull in this place lying here:
Even so my dream fo, sooth unto you shew,
And I doubt not but wee shall finde it tiew.
Then all the four to delbe they took in hand,
And as they sate, right so the gold they fand:
Which gold before into that samine place
Themselves had hid ago but a short space:
Yet not the lesse the Emperours fantasie
Croube they had found the gold in verttie:
Which when he saw he was right wonder glad,
With merrie chear unto the four he said,
Of this found gold the one half ye shall have,
The other half I shall cause to receiue.
The next dreamer said to the Emperour,
Now saie to me (if it be your pleasure)
By night about to dream, if I can finde
Any more gold, if some be left behinde.
The Emperour said, God send you such succourance
As this same day your brother got by chance:
The next night came, and likewise did the day,
The next dreamer to the Emperour can say,
Be of comfort, and if it please your grace
This night I dream of more gold in a place,
Which in short time your noble grace shall know,
And God-willing the same shall to you shew:
And so he did, whereof he was right blith,
Whom to gladly the Emperour said full swith
Take your own part, and I shall take the other,

The seven Sages.

For ye haue done as well as old your brothers:
 So did the thirde on the famine likewise,
 Althow the fourth took that same enterpryse,
 Eachone of them found to the Emperour
 A tun of gold with riches and treasure.
 They caused the King to them giue confidence,
 As they had found the gold by their science,
 Themselues did hide that gold vnder the ground,
 And caused all trow the same that they had found.
 The Emperour so with gold was beguild,
 And with their sight and science was ouersild:
 Notwithstanding the one half he them gabe,
 So wise trusting that they should him deceiue:
 And when either of them had tane their part,
 The Emperour was right iocund in heart:
 He them aduanced, and said they were most true
 Of sooth-sayers that euer yet he knew:
 And most expert into their own science,
 That euer was by his intelligence.
 They perceiuing the Emperour was content,
 Of their doings they said with one consent,
 My Lord, we haue each one our night about
 Dreamed our dreams, which ye haue heard but doubt
 Of very truth, and haue proved indeed,
 Yet furthermore ye will thole us proceed,
 That we all four together dreame this night,
 So shall our dream haue the more strength & might,
 We pray if there within this citie be
 Any hid gold great Jewels or money:
 What shall it haue by our dreames and ingine,
 Though

The seven Sages.

Though it were bid a thousand years sensyne.
Where throught your grace shalbe enricht with gold,
That your compare shal not be in the mold.
And we doubt not, but right well understands,
That there is gold ten thousand of thousands
Within the wals hid of this same citie,
Whereof but doubt good knowledge get shall we.
The Emperour said, Go to, I am content,
So that ye finde where there is gold and rent.
They took good night all four, and said, Adieu
Except themselves was none their minds y knew.
Soon the morn approaching the ninth houre
They came all four befoze the Emperour,
Whom to they said with goodly countenance,
By il oze be blith, for we have good tyhance:
For we all four have dreamed the same night,
Into our sleep we have seen such a sight
Of burning gold, so wonder great plentie,
So much at once I trow few saw with eye:
Will ye suffer the famine to be sought,
To your profite but stay it shal be brought:
Then shall ye have of gold such abundance,
That all the world for gold shal you advance:
Of the great towre, quoth they, into the ground,
All this riches of gold is to be found.
The Emperour said, The great God me defend,
To such a work that I never intend,
The mightie towre where that the image stands,
For to put down with any mans hands,
Which was builded by clarks so bounteous,

The seven Sages.

So done costely of summes to sumptuous:
His warneth us by their small bells ringing,
Of enemies if they be uprising:
Of all regions either by far or near,
If they pretend against us to make war:
Therefore I can by no way give consent
To steele that towre for any gold or rent.
They said, My Lord, have ye not found all true,
That we all four in any sort you shew.
He said, Your wit and science I commend,
And als your truth therein I will defend:
Also your craft, your lawtie and honout,
But I cannot consent to touch the towr,
Which is to us great consolation,
I will not thole no wise to put it down.
They said, My Lord, will ye give us credence,
Withour own hands, and on our own expence,
We shall not faile to obtain the treasure,
And in no sort thereby to hurt the towre:
For images, nor yet the bells that rings,
To save al. such we can do sundrie things:
We shall do it so quietly in the night,
None but we four thereof shall get a sight:
If it be done on day-light patiently
The people then shoud cry out openly,
And rumour rise out through the whole region,
That ye for gold should the great towr break down:
We shall so work, that neither ground nor towr
Shall thole distresse, or yet take displeasure.
The Emperour said, When all folk are at rest,

The seven Sages.

To finde the gold go do as ye think best:
And I the moyn shall come and visse you,
What gold ye get, and where ye work, and how,
Take there my ring for a token expresse,
Within the towre that ye get glad entresse:
These four came on at night when it was late
Unto the towre they make the narrowest gate,
Calld the captain, the ring unto him shew,
Who said to them, The ring right well he knew:
He them instructed what was their great credence,
And they shew him the whole tale and sentence:
And so at last these four set to labour,
To pike and digge, and under mine the towre,
While it had neither power, strength, nor might,
Within three dayes unfaile to stand upright.
This being done, on the third moyn ere day
They leapt on horse, and privily stole away
To their own land, with great blithnesse and joy,
That sound the call that great towre to destroy:
But ere they were forth of sight of the town,
They saw all four, and saw the towre fall down.
So on the moyn when all folk did arise
They saw the towre was faine on such wise:
The Senators thereof they took discomfort,
And to the Emperour the fashion could report:
And said, Good Lord, how hath occurred this fate,
That our great towre is faine in so short space,
Which dayly was our watch, and comforting,
Contrare our foes, and made us ay warning.
He answered them, To me there came soot men,

which

The seven Sages.

Whom of before I never did them ken;
And shew to me that they were lusty lapers,
But now I see that they are great deceivers,
And sware for truth, and also to me, then
By their dreaming where gold was hid they knew
And caused me to woe within the towne ground,
A thousand million of red gold should be found:
And not hurting the towne nor yet image,
To do the same I gave them goodly images,
And so to them I gave two great credences,
Wherethrough is faine great inconvenience.
They answered him, for his great covetise,
Your greedinesse, and burning avarice:
And for your love to gold and great desire,
That yet thereof had such an appetite;
Shall we therefore all be destroyed at ones,
Say, the first wack shall light upon your bones;
But more processe to the tolbooth him led,
And on his back they cast him in a bed,
And poured his mouth of melted gold there forth,
Saying to him, Take enough of it now:
Thou coveted gold with so greedy desire,
Thou hast us tint, and all the whole empire;
For the great lust of gold which thou dost have;
This being done they put him quick in grave:
For greedinesse of gold this was his end,
Which at his death a mite could not him mend;
Not long after came in these kings all three,
All in warfare with a potent armie,
Knowing right well the towne was casten down,

And

The Seven Sages.

And so they laide a great siege to the towne,
Which they ou'came, and cast down clean the wall,
And so at the 2^d Rome was destroyed all.

The Emperesse said. Have ye tane well my Lord
These wordes in heed that now I did recorde
I thank you therefore now Madame, said he,
For ye haue told a noble tale to mee.

Then could she say, This towne with this image
Betokene nought but your own personage:

For looke so long as ye liue in this life,
There is no king that dar raise war or rise
In your contrarie, or yet within your land,
So long as ye are on life now liuand:

And that your son both better well consider,
With the counsell of the Passers together,
With their false tales, and fained narration,
How they shoulde finde the way to put you down:
To great pleasure to hear them all ye haue,

And their minde is but doubt you to deceiue,
As these four this strong towne to ruine brought,
These masters so would bring you eben to nought,
And undermine and cast you under foot,

This is the cause they dayly to you late:
The images that so much money cost,
Are your five wits, which they beleeue are lost:

For so childishly and soft they you perceiue,
The whole impire from you so would they haue.

The Emperour said, That each tale that ye tell
I perceiue well may be told by my self:

Wherefore they shall not make of mee the towne,

The Seven Sages

For yet change me as did the Emperour
 All is false that they deal with I see,
 Therefore the morrow my son shall hang
 The Emperesse said, Will ye your son cause hang,
 Ye shall be blith, farewell, and alas be langed
 So the next day the Emperour gave command
 To take his son, and hang him up fra hand
 To the gallows as they were him leading
 The fifth day after came forth the way
 To the palace he rode hard at the post
 For fear and dread that the child should be lost
 Who came lowly before the Emperour
 And on his knees him halloed with honours
 He wryde his face, and would not see him
 But at him he great indignation took
 My Lord he said, It is not your honour
 My poor halving to take in displeasure
 Why coming here, quoth he, I can not nought
 For thine halving, nor none that here is
 For ye have serbo at mine hand all to die
 For displeasure that ye have done to me
 He said, My Lord, I never did the deed
 Unto your Grace, to get such to my need
 As for your son, where ye say he is
 We reckon that unto your great wisdom
 As ye will see hereafter in few dayes
 As to your wife, where she alledges and says
 By her sayings that he would her have shamed
 But doubt thereof he ought not to be blamed
 For well I wote thereof he is wytelesse.

As

The seven Sages.

As is my self, and of the same sake I see
Therefore my Lord, such thing belongeth you nought,
For the contrate to light it shall be by bright;
For to vertue your son is so inclinde,
I know such vice was never in his minde.
And if yee will for your sonnes willfull lawes
Ando your son without proce he of lawes,
It shall be worse to you now, cher was
To the Doctour and cunning Hypocras,
That caused slay the Doctour Calene,
His chosen dear master in medicine.
The Emperour saide, After, tell me that tale,
Perchance it may for your cunning auaile.
The Master said, Cause call your son again,
And all the sooth I shall shew you in plain
Unto your grace if I told my narration.
In the meane time your son should suffer passion.
The Emperour then he cauld his servants passe,
And put his son in prison where he was.
And so that day he escaped from the gallies.
The Master then told forth his tale as followes,
The Masters tale ere we speak further more
Of the Duenes tale we must some thing declare.

MORALITAS

Say yee not by this noble Queen,
That ay before so good hath been,
Cald her Lord selfe before his ein, said openly
That hee of falset was not clean, read yee, and see.

The seven Sages.

In the beginning of her last tale,
Where he should have the honour hale,
Iudge yee if he did to him faile in her language,
To call a King so vilde a thing with great outrage.

But women have such condition,
When they are noide to want reason,
They spout then like a Scorpion by order clean,
Because quite gone is discretion, as did this Queen.

Also the Emperour far did faile,
Some had condition of small avail:
Which that he had by his counsell, to their consent,
Forsooth a King should work nothing but avancement.

So was seen of the casting down
Of the great towre in Rome's towne,
Where he made privie compaction, that none did know,
With uncouth men of strange nation, as deed did show.

Yee Lords and Ladies of great honour,
Do not as did this Emperour,
Put all his hope into treasure and great riches,
And lost his life within an houre for greedinesse.

His greedinesse was so well kend,
That it went to the worlds end:
His foes whom to hee did offend got wit expresse,
How his pleasure was on treasure for greedinesse.

In haste they finde a quick ingine,
Send him a tubtile hid propine,
Which caused him his honour tine in short processe,
And put all Rome to great ruine for greedinesse.

The seven Sages.

For strangers came with their vain winde,
And false flatterie made him so blinde;
Such gold and treasure they should finde through sublenesse,
That they it said hee was right glad for greedinesse.

They shew him they had such science,
In dreaming they had experience,
Of gold to get such influence by businesse,
But he gave too hastie credence for greedinesse.

Which causeth much mischief to bee,
As yee may well perceive and see,
Gets most credence who best can lie through wickednesse,
Of half a tale they will make three for greedinesse.

And can bring up a tale of nought,
And say the thing that never was thought,
Nor never said, nor never thought of wilfulnesse,
Some gave it credence even as it dought for greedinesse.

And even so did this Emperour,
Gave such credence unto these four,
To furnish gold and great treasure to his highnesse,
Gave them leave to cast down the towre for greedinesse.

Which ever was to Romes town
Such comfort and consolation;
If they thought good to some region they would them dresse,
And yet the towre was casten down for greedinesse.

It is a poysond pestilence,
For to give too hastie credence,
To tell a tale not worth audience through hastinesse,
The tale-teller then wineth meane for greedinesse.

The seven Sages.

There is many mo then a new
Will make a tale was never true,
Yet they themselves it never knew but as they geffe,
Some will say false, and after few for greedinesse.

There is diuerse tines their honour,
Their worship, riches, and pleasure,
Of times in vain makes great labour with small increase,
And oft is ordered by order for greedinesse.

For greedinesse causeth great grief,
Envy, malice, and all mischief:
Many for mutton, and for beef into mirknesse
Is hanged like a common thief for greedinesse.

Therefore good sirs, heartly I pray you
Cast greedinesse aside from you,
With iocund minde passe and go play you in merrinesse,
There is no better charm now for your greedinesse.

Now these three Kings when they did hear,
The towne wherof they stood in fear,
Was casten down but shield or spear through wylineffe,
In all haste made them to the war through greedinesse.

For first they found a wyllow way
For to put Rome in great dismay,
And thought they would in that way to get encrease,
For they will make it their first pray for greedinesse.

Belyve they came and sieged the towne,
In all good haste the wals brake down,
And put themselves in possession with all blisshnesse,
And from the Emperours rest his crown for greedinesse.

Now sirs, this is the finall end,
To greedinesse who will pretend,
When they cannot themselves defend by manlinesse,
Away with vengeance all doth wend for greedinesse.

There

The seven Sages.

There is two points into this tale,
Them to forbear as good and happy
The first is greediness but full of gold and gear,
Hastie credence of heresies hallo, these two forbear

A reproach or reproofe to the Emperesse.

O Catiue queen, and cruel, and root of all mischief,
O false flesh snare, and fruit of all grief:
Wild ravens shall tiew thy beere, wood dogs thy bones shall
gnaw,
Ere ever thou get relief thy lads shall thole the pain:
We shall make all men know, and this perfectly see
Thy deeds the truth shall show of thy bid hat looke.

The tale of the fifth Master.

Before time a Philician there was
A cunning clark, was name was Hypocras,
Which in physick and other high science
Do'r all other hee had prebeminence:
Als he had with him a kinsman of his own,
Called Galene, whose cunning was well known:
Als his ingine and cunning did apply
To learn physick, and the same occupy,
As his uncle at some times had before,
Where with he wan great honour, laud and gloze:
But in so much Galene was not soold,
Yet he exceld his uncle manifold:

In

The seven Sages.

In physick art, and into medicine
 He was moze sharp and quicker of insight.
 When Hypocras perceyding in his heart,
 That Galene in the craft was so expert,
 Dreading therefoze that he should him excell,
 And from his gloze and profite him expell:
 And therefoze did as muchle as he might
 From Galene of the craft to hude the sight.
 When Galene well thyng he did perceybe,
 Kest him dayly the moze and moze to have:
 Of physick art the moze he did obtain
 On one day moze then befoze in fifteen:
 Whereby the Dottour took in his conceat,
 That Galene should grow to greater estate:
 Therefoze at him he had lurking envy,
 Howbeit he had no quarrell, cause, noz why.
 In this mean time the King of Hungarie
 Sent his message with ships out through the sea
 For Hypocras that he might with him speak,
 And cure his son which lay right wonder sick:
 So Hypocras the message did receave,
 Heartly praying the messengers him to have:
 Some part excusd onto their noble King,
 For he by age might make no travelling:
 But I shall send my consen and serband,
 What I will bid that will he take on hand.
 So Galene obeyed his uncles will,
 And in all points the same he did fulfill:
 And past his way unto that noble King,
 Who was right blith and glad of his coming,

But

The Seven Sages.

But he marveld why came not Hypocras.
Then Galene said, that old and weak he was,
Might not trauell, soz no travel he used,
Paying his grace soz to have him excused:
And at that time had businesse ado,
That he no way as then might win him so:
But in his stead he hath me to you send,
With help of God your son shall I amend:
Of the which thing the King was well content,
Galene with speed unto the child he went,
Felt his pulses, and als his urine saw,
Wherby belibe his sicknesse he did know.
Incontinent then past he to the Queen,
And said, Madame your sick son I have seen:
And I am come unto your noble Grace,
Beseeching you to hear me speak a space:
Take no disdain, though I now to you speak,
I came to heal your son that lyeth sick.
She said, Good Sir, say on what pleaseth you,
For ye will say nought but the truth I trow.
He said, Madame, tell on, and make no lie.
Who is the father of your son tell mee:
Who is father, quoth she, who but the king.
Anoth he, Madame there is not such a thing.
Well, say yet so, quoth she, soz veritie,
Peis want the head I vow right hastily:
Once I said else, and yet I say again,
The King is not his father in certain:
I came not here therfore to losse mine head,
For yet incurre in my fault any fead,

The seven Sages.

In physick art, and into medicine
 He was moze sharp and quicker of ingenie.
 When Hypocras perceiuing in his heart,
 That Galene in the craft was so expert,
 Dreading therefore that he should him excell,
 And from his gloze and profite him expell:
 And therefore did as mighte as he might
 From Galene of the craft to hde the sight.
 When Galene well this thing he did perceiue,
 Hest him dayly the moze and moze to haue:
 Of physick art the moze he did obtain
 On one day moze then before in fifteen:
 Wherby the Dottour took in his conceit,
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The seven Sages.

But he mardold why came not Hypocras.
Then Galene said, that old and weak he was,
Might not travell, for no travel he used,
Praying his grace for to have him excused:
And at that time had businesse ado,
That he no way as then might win him to:
But in his stead he hath me to you send,
With help of God your son shall I amend:
Of the which thing the King was well content,
Galene with speed unto the child he went,
Felt his pulses, and also his urine saw,
Whereby belibe his sicknesse he did know.
Incontinent then past he to the Queen,
And said, Madame, your sick son I have seen:
And I am come unto your noble Grace,
Beseeching you to hear me speak a space:
Take no disdain, though I now to you speak,
I came to heal your son that lyeth sick.
She said, Good Sir, say on what pleaseth you,
For ye will say nought but the truth I crow.
He said, Madame, tell on, and make no lie.
Who is the father of your son tell me:
Who is father, quoth she, who but the King.
Quoth he, Madame there is not such a thing.
Well, say yet so, quoth she, for veritie,
Preis want the head I vow right hastily:
Once I said else, and yet I say again,
The King is not his father in certain:
I came not here therfore to losse mine head,
Nor yet incurre in my fault any fead,

The seven Sages.

For I have not desired such reward,
 Though I none get, nothing that I regard.
 So to the doo: he made him straight a way,
 The Quene that saw, and to him ran the say,
 O good master, if ye will keep secrece,
 I will you show, so ye discover not mee.
 Then Galene said, Madame, God me defend,
 But I so do unto my livers end:
 Therefore to mee to shew the truth be bold,
 For it again shall never moze be told:
 In greater thing your Grace so shall I please,
 Your son make whole, and put him well to ease.
 If ye do so, good master then she said,
 Ye will me make right wonder blith and glad:
 And good reward of mee so shall ye have,
 And of my Lord likewise ye will receive,
 Therefore hear me, while I have said something,
 Upon a time came to my Lord and King
 The King of Burbon to passe the time in sport,
 What will ye moze? to make my tale now short,
 To you Master, as now I will not lie,
 With mee he got this child in privitie.
 When Galene said, Fear not, and speak no moze,
 The tale I knew right perfectly before:
 When to the child he past incontinent,
 And him did cure with a right regiment,
 What would he drink, and what would be his meat,
 Water to drink, and beef dayly to eat:
 So Galene then within dayes two or thre
 The child made whole of his infirmite:

When

The seven Sages.

When that the king heard tell his son was free
Of all sicknesse and of all maladie,
Unto Galene a good reward he gave,
But doubt it from the Queen he did receave,
With speciall thanks, and after ay credence,
So took his leaue, and homeward he past hence:
When he came home to his Cme Hypocras,
At Galene then but tarie could him as,
How is the child that yett past for to see?
Sir he is whole of all sicknesse, said he.
Then Hypocras desired him to conclide
What he him gave to his drink and his food,
He said, He gave him oren flesh to eat,
Water to drink, this was his drink and meat.
Then Hypocras to Galene said fra hand,
The mother is not true to her husband.
Then Galene said, Now master, sooth ye say,
With displeasure Hypocras past his way,
Said to himself, with hatred and envy,
Well I perceiue no man will set mee by.
Within short time be no remedie found,
But quite to nought my cunning is confound:
By his cunning he shall not faile to be
Praised in woorks ten times far aboue me:
And ere so were, unlesse I found remedie,
Rather I shall conspire my counsels dead.
From that time sooth Hypocras ay him drest,
How he might get Galene dead and supprest.
In a morning Hypocras up can rise,
Past to his Garth, as his use was and guise.

The seven Sages.

To Galene said with fair words and meek,
Now let us go in our garden to seek
Herbes to be salve that is of most vertue,
For as I with there is growing anew.
After he said, I am ready at hand,
What ye please best, to do as ye command.
Hypocras said, Take up that herb so green,
For it is full of vertue as I ween:
And so he did at his masters command,
He puld the herb, and gave it in his hand,
And at his nose the savour thereof smell:
This herb, said he, of herbes beareth the bell.
Stomp down again, and pul it by the root,
Of it I shall both get profit and fruit:
For I know well it is right wonder good
To coul feber, or to stem running blood:
Als of vertue it is right comfort to be
To heal all ill: to any manon it be.
So Galene none bill having in mind,
To pull the root lowly his head inclind,
Which would not draw a long time with his hand,
Then Hypocras above him could be stand,
And with his knite he strake him to the heart,
Because in science he thought him too expert.
Soon after this Hypocras took sicknesse
By want of blood, and of corpe feeblesse,
Then kest his books, and sought his own science,
Himself to help he could get no defence.
Then his scollers in all haste came him till,
And said, After, what is your mirde and will?

The seven Sages.

He bade them bring a tun of water soon,
With a womble an hundred holes bozeth soon.
When that was done there went no water out,
Then Hypocras said to them, Sirs, but doubt
This is the wrath of the great God so hie,
That this mischance hath suffered fall on me,
As ye may see, and verie well perceave.
For all is just, and worthie that I have:
And as ye see there is into this tun
An hundred holes with yrons out through run:
Through all these holes there goes not out a drop,
But as ye see both both stand still and stop,
Which to nature is contrare every deal,
Whereby ye may all understand right well:
Even so these herbes for health that ye give me
May nothing help to mine infirmite:
Therefore what ever ye take on me cure,
It helps nothing ye may be verie sure:
For well I wote as now is no remead,
But for my misse I must now thole the dead:
But if Calene my nephew were liband,
He would not fail to make me clean fra hand:
Whom I did kill through malice and envie:
But of that dead right soze repent do I:
Therefore God hath by his just ordinance
Sent upon me this hastie soze vengeance:
As he so said, no more words then he told,
But turnd his back, and up the ghost he yold.
The Master said, Hath your grace done conceave
The simple words that to you shawen I have?

The seven Sages.

The Emperour said, well I perceave the case,
That Galene he was kild by Hypocras.
To Hypocras what hurt might it have ben,
What great honour had then come to Galene
The master said, It had ben good at all,
If Hypocras to sicknesse had ben thzall,
Then Galene might perchance soon found remead,
And at that time he should not have thold dead:
Therefore because himself by ill intent
Kild and put down the very instrument,
Who would have him supported in his Gresse,
Ye may perceiue in God the great goodnesse,
And right judgement, that so dull made his heart,
That he could not himself help by no art:
Therefore my Lord, it is eben such a case
Betwixt your son and your own noble grace:
And if your son for your wives word you ha,
Considering well ye know ye have no ma,
When he is dead ye shall waille your weild,
And would be faine to scart him out of eild:
When ye are old, and may not help your sell,
He will you help, the truth to you I tell:
Therefore giue not such credence to your Maen,
She will deceiue your grace when ye least wæn:
Consider well this is your second wife,
Ye may have mo enduring yet your life:
Amongst them all yet ye shall neuer have
So wise a son none of them shall conceave,
So vertuous, or in wit so precel,
And in your age will save you from perrell,

The

The seven Sages.

The Emperour said, for that ye tell to me,
Surely this day my son he shall not die:
But I perceibe and wonder well do mark
That women be right craftie in their wark,
And right subtil for to tye any man,
As they think good, but not the lesse what than?
For mine own sake this day he shall not die,
When I have need I know he will help me.
The Master said, I thank your noble grace,
So took his liebe, and went home to his place.

Vhen that this tale was told to the Emperesse
If she was blith the auditors may gesse:
She shew her self in minde impatient,
All that her saw believ'd that she had went
Quite out of mind, and as a bodie mad,
And her five wits clean tint away she had:
All that her saw had pittie on her chear,
She shouted so that all the place might hear.
Some of the Lords to the Emperour can go,
And shew to him that it stood with her so,
They said, My Lord, unlesse ye finde remed,
Your own Emperesse will put her self to dead:
Whom to be past, and asked her wherfore,
Each day ye mourn, bered ay more and more.
She said, My Lord, I marvell in a part,
That I brast not, and in two breaks mine heart,
I know, I am the daughter of a king,
And then your wife, which is a greater thing:
In all my dayes suffered I not such shame,

The seven Sages.

As I haue done since I came to you hame:
 And euer more y^e promise mee amends,
 And as y^e do God and the world hens.
 The Emperour said, I know not what to do,
 Noz to which side is best to turn me to:
 For day by day y^e seek mine own sons dead,
 And his masters thereof do seek remed.
 He is my son, that I beliebe and know,
 But I cannot the veritie yet show:
 Whither to yon I shall giue more credence,
 When the masters with all their great science:
 Ze tell a tale which I think good and fair,
 And they another to yours is contrare.
 The Emperesse said, That is the verie thing
 That troubles my heart, and causeth my mourning,
 Because y^e giue unto them more credence,
 And to thei^r tales takes greater attendance,
 Than to my tale, which tels the veritie,
 Which y^e shall soze repent yet ere y^e die:
 And in few dayes y^e will get such reward,
 As did the King receiue from his steward.
 The Emperour said, When tell me that tale soon,
 Perchance your will thereafter may be done.
 She said, I will begin with diligence,
 But I pray yon to mee giue audience,
 With peart visage, and countenance right hale,
 On this fashion began to tell her tale:
 Yet ere she gett^r her tale audience,
 Some we will say of the last tale past hence.

MOR.

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The seven Sages. MORALITAS.

YEE may perceiue now here expresse,
Of women the great brucklenesse,
And of their kinde the kittlenesse, and shee a Queen.
Her own priuities she did confesse unto *Galene*.

At short to him her minde hath shown,
A King she hauing of her own,
Another took, but little known, and of the new,
But many such draughts they haue drawn that few men know.

Peradventure she must be excusit,
Peradventure she will not use it,
As now she shall not be excusde, I say for mee,
Even as yee finde the soord so ruse it, where ever yee bee,

And let such quyet pakes ov'r passe,
And some thing say of *Hypocras*,
That so full of envie he was, but cause or why,
Galene he slew that was so true through poore envie.

Hypocras clean I discommend,
Ever in heart for to pretend,
So far at *Galene* to offend, as him to sla,
But he repented at his end that hee did do.

The principall cause thereof finde I,
That *Hypocras* had so great envy
At *Galene*, this was his cause why, that *Galene* was
More firm and stable, in craft more able than *Hypocras*.

Hypocras should haue had pleasure,
That *Galene* got any honour:
For he was *Galenes* Doctour, therefore say I
Hee should haue born to him fauour, and not envy.

Bus

The seven Sages.

But God of his great equitie
Would not thole such unpunisht bee:
When *Hypocras* was in point to die all his cunning
Could not then help him worth a flie at his ending.

Hee said, had *Galene* been livand
Hee could have helped him fra hand:
But he wist well it was the wand that God had send
Him such distresse, and great sicknesse, that none could mend.

The hid envie and great hatrent
That hee had to this innocent,
Could not eschew the punishment of hea ven so hie,
Good sirs, lay by all hid invie, keep charitie.

Envie and charitie are contrare,
They can not in a place repare,
Where charitie is God is ay there withoutten failc,
Envie was and is evermare with grief and bail.

It is the fountain and the flood
Of shadding of all innocent blood:
And is contrare unto all good, and is the roor,
Envie therefore shall never glore of joy the fruit.

Austine declares envie to bee
A man to have sturt inwardly,
Of his neighbours felicitie, withoutten cause,
The which is contrare charitie, and God his lawes.

Doctours do write there is a hill,
Called *Aerna*, that burnes ay still
In flame of fire, and never will bee quenched out,
And yet they say it doth none ill to ground about.

Which hill burning men do compare
To a man that lyes evermare

The seven Sages.

In flurr, envie, anger, and care continually
In fire flames himself consumes ay inwardly.

Envyfull man comparde may bee
Unto a leper man truly,
Hee would all men were such as he, even so the devil,
Would none were good, nor yet well lov'd, cause hee is evill.

Therefore my Lords and Readers all,
Touching this point I cry and call:
So to envie yee bee not thrall for ought may bee,
For the great Lord celestiall is charitic.

A laud or praise to the fifth Doctour.

PRadent, perfect, expert Philosophour;
Honour and praise bee to thee digne Doctour,
That hath ov'rput a day so perrelous,
With thy sweet tale before the Emperour,
Who kindled was in fell and fire furour,
Contrare his son in minde malicious,
By entising of his wife venemous;
But thou from him with fair words and favour
Hast purchast grace while time more prosperous.

The sixth tale of the Empreſſe.

BEfore this time there was a mightie king.
Proud in heart, and proud above all thing;
Hee was so hight, and proud in his thought,
All other men hee set them clean at nought.
This king he thought all Rome for to destroy,

The

The seven Sages.

The Romanes day, and after to conboy
To his kingdome the dead bones of these two,
Peter and Paul, with many reliques mo.
To waste that town, and put it all to sack,
But his purpose was something put aback:
Into his face was so disfigureate
In such a sort, that every kinde of state
Abhorred so his ugly soul visage,
That none covet to touch his personage:
So handled hee was with infirmittie,
With lepernesse a fouler none could bee:
Yet his nature rose on him with such rage,
To have women hee had a great courage.
So called hee his steward quietly,
And shew to him his counsell secretly,
Saying, My friend, one thing I will you shew,
All woman kinde abhorres mee as ye know,
That I can get of them no companie,
Which if I had were great pleasure to mee.
He said, My Lord, and please your noble grace,
Howbeit ye be deformed in the face:
Ye have enough of good money and gold,
For to conduce the fairest on the mold:
Therefore I say, ye need not in no sort
Of fair women to want the great comfort.
Then said the king, So for no cost ye spare,
To get mee one that is both fresh and faire:
Howbeit ye gave a thousand crownes therfore,
And ere I went ye shall give mekle more.
The steward said, I will do that I may,

The seven Sages.

To fill your will, and so he came his way:
Thinking in minde, blinded with cobetice,
These thousand crownes may I get on this wise
Win to my self, and to my wife alone,
And so homeward to his wife he is gone,
Who was right faire, lobe some with all beantie,
Vertuous and good, right pleasant for to se:
Prudent, perfit, with countenanceright glad,
With cobetous heart these words to her he said,
O my good wife, my Soberaigue Lord the King
Hath charged mee with a right secret thing:
To have women he is right cobetous
At his pleasure, and very desirous,
Which for no cost he sayes that he will want,
And chargeth me a thousand crowns to grant
To any person that will the same receave,
But for one night with him her for to have:
Therefore in minde my self I have compass,
Betwixen us two I think this be the best:
The thousand crowns to purchase to our self,
So ye will use my bidding and counsell.
She good, Good sir, your counsell I will do,
So to no sin nor shame it turn mee to.
He said, ye shall passe to the Kings own bed,
Which is with silk, and cloth of gold overlaid:
And there all night ly with him quyetlie,
At his pleasure as he thinks best to be:
That it is yet there is no man shall ken
But I alone, the which above all men
Should save your shame, and also your honestie,
There

The seven Sages.

Therefore as shame to you it cannot be.
Alas, she saith, Husband is that your will,
By your bodie my womanhead to spill
With a leper: and so desoymd in face.
Sir, change your minde for him that gave all grace:
I know it is neither your thought nor minde,
To such a deed mine heart should be inclinde,
But me to probe, and to tempt mine intent,
If I thereto would any wise consent.
O my good wife, howbeit he leper be,
And in the face desoymed as yee see:
And soul of flesh, and also soul of blood,
Yet then the gold is verie sweet and good.
He said again, My sweet husband perceiue,
Howbeit the gold be good and sweet to haue:
And though he were the cleaneest man thereout,
Most fair of face, gentle, courtesie, and stout,
Would yee that I committed such a sin,
Against my God for any gold to win:
I will not do it. therefore hold me excus'd,
Charge me no more, for here I quite refuse it:
Whom to he said with a right answer look,
How purpose yee my companie to brook?
That thing I will to please for to gainstand,
Yee are too peart to contrare my command:
It is my will, and that same shall be done,
Therefore make you ready to please me soon:
Do ye it not. I vow betwixt us tway
Shall never be a blith nor joyfull day:
But evermore in chiding and in grief,

which

The seven Sages.

Which at the last will turn to a mischief:
Know ye not well to the church when ye went,
Ye sware ye should be ay obedient
To mee alone, as wedlock us declares,
Pea, sir she said, in all lawfull affaires,
Not displeasing my Maker, King of kings,
I will obey you in all other things:
If you command by vertue of that oath,
Which soe to break ye should be verie loath,
Considering it is my minde and will,
Without gainsay my bidding ye fulfill:
And to the same right soon that ye consent,
Or I abow right soe ye shall repent.
In the mean time as he these wordes shep,
Out of his sheath his whinger forth he drew:
She trembling soe for great dreadour and fear,
Forth of that stead a step she durst not fear,
Perceaving well his crueltie and boast,
And in great doubt her life soe to be lost:
The impatience, and the great greedinesse,
The cruel minde, and als the crabednesse
Of this ill man, this woman did attend,
Which in no sort nor fashon she could mend:
She was constrainde what soe dreadour and awe,
Foe to consent to his command and law.
She said, Goodman, your bidding I must do,
But great God knowes if my will be thereto:
But I appeal from all consent of sin,
What may follow, or in this case come in:
And on your self all whole I lay the charge,

And

The seven Sages.

And befoze God hereof I me discharge.
Then the steward but any tarrying
Past in all haste, and said unto the king,
I habe you gotten a woman right famous,
Gentle, courtes, and come of a good house,
Fair and well labourd, right pleasant for to see,
And she must come to you right quietlie:
Within the night she must come late at e'en,
But me alone with none she will be seen:
Early at mozt befoze the sun rising
From you likewise she must make departing:
For this she will a thousand crowns habe,
And for payment but me none shall she crabe.
Then said the king, Of that I am content,
As ye habe done thereto I will consent:
Withouthen more the steward he hath led
His own sponso wife unto the kings bed,
And with the key the doo he hath made fast
But any noise, and so away is past:
Early at mozt, in dawning of the day,
The steward rose, and to the king can say,
My soveraigne Lord, and please your noble grace,
It will be day within a prettie space:
I think it good that woman ye let go,
For I promise that your Grace should do so.
Then said the king, this woman pleaseth mee
So wonder well, as yet her companie
I will not want, neither for gold nor gear
This hour to come I will not let her stear.
When he that heard he was right wonder wo,

And

The seven Sages.

And from the dooꝝ with sozie heart did go:
Within a while but tarte come again,
And to the king he said, Wit, for certayn,
The day is light, and that woman present,
With the folk she will be shamefully hent:
And my promise to her quite I have broken,
For not keeping to her that I have spoken.
Then said the king, no wise yet she shall passe,
For she shall have of me what she will as:
Therefore steward I say to you in plain,
Go passe your way; and lock the dooꝝ again.
The steward then right sorrowfull in heart,
Upon need force to the dooꝝ did depart,
Went up and down, and knew not what to say;
The sun was high, and much spent of the day:
He came again, and said unto the king,
It is two hontes after the sun rising:
That woman will be hent withoutten doubt
With all the folk, and people here about.
The king answered, nothing of him content,
I you command that you your self absent:
Unto the time that I please for to rise,
For unrequirde ye have troubled me thise.
And my pleasure is with this companie,
Therefore passe on, at this time let me be:
The stewards heart if it was then on steer
(As I beliebe) there needes no man to speere:
Yet not the lesse he could not keep counsell,
For all his wit he would describe him sell:
Incontinent withoutt moze avising,

with

The seven Sages.

With soyle heart he said unto the king,
O my good Lord, I open yon mine heart,
That same woman ye will not thole depart
Without licence, she is my wedded wife,
Now in your hands lyes both my death and life.
The king heard that, and said, All was not right,
Opned the windows, and saw fair day light,
Saw the woman, who was luffie in face,
A word not spake a Pater noster space:
Then saw it was eben as the Steward said,
Whereof he was right soyle and not glad,
Whom to he said, O thou most wicked knabe!
How durst thou be so peart me to deceave?
And me to cause thy wife for to abuse,
Thy greedie heart thy self it shall confuse.
Why hast thou caused thy wife unwillingly
Come in my bed to me unwittingly?
For a small summe of money or riches,
To shame thy self for thy great greedinesse
In new ye not well withoutten any fable
Thy maladie was ay incurable?
All was in thee thou hast done, I declare,
Thy self, thy wife to undo evermore:
Therefore passe swith in haste out of my sight,
For in my realme that thou bide not a night:
And from hence forth if ever I thee see,
A shameful death I avow thou shalt die.
Incontinent he past from his presence,
And never saw the king from that time hence:
Draite off the realm from thence he did him dresse,

That

The seven Sages.

That same reward he got for grædinesse,
This being done, the king in all his dayes
Held up his wife as the hystorie sayes:
In great worship, and gabe to her yearly.
A summe of gold to keep her honestly:
After that time I do not finde nor read,
With this woman that had actually dyed,
Shon after this the king caused to convene,
A great Armie all clad in Armour cleane,
With great puissance, and noble men of war,
In all effaires as to them could effar:
And went to Rome with great power and might,
To siege the same the gate they held on right:
And so they did it siege on either side,
That the Romanes therein durst not bide,
He sieg'd it still so sharp and wonder sore,
That they therein might it defend no more:
So at the last to a counsell they went,
Thinking they shuld with the king mak pointment
Which was for to deliver him at once,
Of Peter and paul the blest bodie and bones:
Which was the cause of this great erand there,
For to obtaine the same withoutten mære:
In the city then was there still present,
Seven wise Passers who had the regiment,
Of all the town; and nothing by them done:
Early at Morn, at Even, or yet at Noon,
And to these seven the Citizens came to
And said, Passers, great thing we have ado;
We are compeld by force of yon armie,

The seven Sages.

For to giue order and rander the Citie:
 Vnto these folk which are our enemies,
 Or else for to deliuer the bodie:
 Of good Peter and Paul his holy brother,
 On force we must the one do or the other:
 The first Master again to them he said,
 My good neighbour, take not fear but be glad.
 As for this day the city I shall save,
 With the wisdom and cunning that I haue.
 The second said the next day falleth me,
 From enemies for to keep the citie.
 With my wisdom, and als my clear cunning,
 For all the strength of that great puissant king.
 So did the third, and fourth withouten doubt.
 The fift, the sixt, right so the seven all out.
 In like manner, as these seven Masters now,
 Vnto your son hath promised to you.
 In the meane time the King caused his armie,
 Lay an assault about the great citie,
 With such awfull and cruell munition,
 While they were like for to obtaine the Town.
 The first Master then he came to the King,
 And with him fell in talk and communing:
 And talked so in such manner and wise,
 As for that day he caused the armie rise,
 And from the town the siege aback he drew:
 As for that day no more he did persw.
 But on the morne the siege away they laid,
 The next Master past to the King, and said,
 In like manner as did the other besore,

And

The seven Sages.

And for that day they sieged the town no more:
So they did all while it came to the last,
On the seventh day they sieged the town so fast
It was belænde the same they would obtaine,
Then all the town together did conbæin:
All in one voice of the seventh Master said,
About the town so strong a siege is laid,
That we belæve nothing but cruell dead,
Unlesse that ye finde some help and remead.
Conforme to the saying, ye said but doubt,
That was each one to save your day about:
And we are all informed of suttie,
The king hath made his oath solemnedie:
He shall not raise his siege nor Punition,
Unto the time that he obtain the town:
To you Master we can now say no more,
We would ye did as your fellows befor.
To whom he said, my friends take ye no fear,
Be of comfort, and eachone make good chear:
The Dozne I shall with my work and cunning,
Shale yon same boast, and also pray the king,
He shall be glad for all his great puissance,
To passe away with his great ordinance:
They went their way, and no more took in thought
But all merbelde how such thing should be thought
The Dozne earely the siege was sure confirme.
To have the town also the king was sure determe
This seventh Master to his chamber he went,
And clad him in a strange abillement,
As Peacock talles, and feathers of every beu,

The seven Sages.

Part red, part white, part yellow, grān and blew
A bzight drazon sword he took in every hand,
On a towze head he pass up for to stand:
Which was most high of all the whole citie,
For nence the hoast, that they might all him see:
The two bzight swords into his mouth he took,
The same shining upon the armie shok.
Whiles turned East, and other whiles West,
Whils south, whils north, where they might see him
The shining swords against the sun so blent (best
With his cloathing and strange abillement,
They in the hoast right well and clearly saw,
But what it was no man of them did know:
As the great Lords, when they beheld such thing,
Half in effray they went all to the King:
And said, O Lord, behold upon yon towze,
We see this day a wonderfull figure.
Then said the king, the same I do perceave,
But what it is no knowledge I can have.
They said we know what thing it is but doubt
It is Iesus down of the heaven come out,
Who is the God of all yon chzisten folk:
And knowing well how that we do provok,
His atosome yre and how we do pretend,
To slay his folk, which he will ay defend:
Yon samine swords that ye see shining sa,
They signifie each one they will vs sla.
If we longer into this field abide,
Our counsell is therefore that we home ride,
The king hearingt rembled for very fear:

Causdo

The seven Sages.

Cause he raise his host and all his men of war,
And said, it is better in time to flee,
For you their God with his words make us die.
Then all the host in haste they made them hie,
Frayd without cause, with make, scorn and shame
Howbeit to flee no perill was nor need,
But all deceit by the Hesters false deed,
When the Romanes perceived the Armie flee:
Eachone they ishe and went off the cite.
With manly heart, and goodly countenance,
Followed the King and all his ordinance:
Slew and destroyde all that they please that day,
And whom they list they brought captiue away.
And so the King and all his great armie,
Brought was to ground by the great subtiltie,
Of this Hester who wrought all by deceit:
That with power no maner could debate.

¶ The Emperice then said to the Emperour,
This tale I told it is under cullour:
But would great God this tale ye understood,
He said Madame I think it very good,
In the first end (quoth she) I know you heard
What I you told of the greedy Steward:
That the King trowd as well as his own life,
And yet for gold he sold his wedded wife.
As als himself was banisht the Countrie,
Because the King found him so false and lye:
In like maner your Son for the desire,
And appetite he hath to the Emperre:
Now day by day it is his minde and thought,

The seven Sages.

Pou to destroy and bring you unto nought,
But now so long as ye are in your might:
Do as the King did with the Steward right.
If ye purpose not to slay him fra hand,
Then banish him and als so: swear the land:
That ye and I who am your wedded wife,
In time coming in rest may lead our life.
Also ye heard how the King lay at Rome,
To win the same how that he did presume:
And was mocked by these Pastors in plaine,
He and his folkes were all put down and slaine.
Pour seven Pastors into the same wise,
Intend to do ay such like enterpryse.
With their false tales at end will you deceabe,
That your false son all the Emperre should have
The Emperour said, by no way it shall be,
The mozne betime he shall not faile to die.
Incontinent he called his servants,
And to them all he gave such strait commands,
That one the mozne without impediment,
On the gallous but faile his son be sent.
This word in haste past out thzough all the town,
Whereat many made lamentation:
That the Emperour for the words of his wife,
From his one son with shame should take his life.
The first Pastor heard tell of this effray,
Leap on his horse withoutten moze delay.
Posted fra hand unto the Emperour,
And halised him with reverence and honour:
Who took the same very unthankfully,

And

The seven Sages.

And said, We seruide at his hand for to die.
And als his Son, whom that they had made dumb,
For they were too peart in his p[re]sence to come:
The Paister said, I serue not for to die,
Nor yet your Son, knew ye the veritie.
That he is dumbe where ye alledge and sayes,
Of that the truth ye shall know in few dayes:
If ye him stay for that your wife can tell,
Of your wisdom then haue I great marvell:
And without doubt it shall you happen right,
As it hapened sometime unto a knight.
To his wifes saws gave such fidelitie,
That he was drawn out throught the whole cite,
At an horse-taile, and hanged like a thief,
His wifes saws brought him to such mischief.
The Emperour said, I pray thee tell that tale,
The Paister said, Sir, that shall I not fail:
So ye will cause your Son to come again,
And for this day ye let him not be slaine.
Incontinent the Emperour gave command,
To the prison to lead his Son fra hand.
And so was done. The Paister then but mare,
To tell his tale began thus to declare.
The Doctors tale furthermozeere we hear,
Some morall sense of the last let us hear.

MORALITAS.

THis pridefull King he could not reigne,
With measure nor humilitie:
He was so proud he thought none could,
Compare to him there might not be:

The

The seven Sages.

The Lord of all perceiye and saw,
That his heart was so proud and hig:
He would correct him and infect
With plague and great infirmite.

Where there is pride he cannot bide,
Out of that doom in haste he rins:
Into all haste as he were chafde
To lowlinesse to seek an Innes:
The bright angel for pride he fell,
In hell yet still in paine he winnes
I say you all, that maye shall call,
His work with pride alway beginsnes.

The wise man writes where he indites,
All beginning of ill is pride:
And many no sayes, come right to,
Into their writings do not hide.
Therefore the Lord will no wayes cord;
Where pride hath credence for to guide:
I you declare he scourgeth sore,
For where pride is, God will not hide.

Of his Justice such wicked vice,
He will not thole unpunished be:
By battell, pest, war, or want;
Some perrilous plague or povertie,
Hunger or skant of food or want,
Infected with infirmite,
Therefore flee pride all times and tide,
And hold you with humilitie.

Als in this tale withouten faile,
Great covetice ye may perceive:
The false Steward that found the ar,
The King himself and wife deceave:

But

The seven Sages.

But on himself the sorrow fell,
He was worthy the same to have,
To be exylde the King beguilde,
I say for me he playde the knave.

That his own wife first fylde her life,
And then her soul with deadly sin:
Fy Steward, fy, was that thy way,
So foolishly gear for to win?
With covetice and avarice,
At such a false way to begin:
For greedinesse to win riches,
Too many to the devill would rin.

By common theft some makes their shift,
In this world while their life be ended:
To pluck the poor, they take no cure,
Who have no power to defend it,
Some reaves and ruges, some rives and druges
And purposeth never to amend it,
But when it is win, few of your kin
Nor yet your self shall never spend it.

So coverous and desirous,
The Steward was gold for to win:
He cared nought for to have brought,
His wife to deadly shame and sin.
Whether he got it or no, few wote it,
For fra the king and him did twin,
Indeed I trow, to say to you,
He had another web to spin.

He charged was with for to passe,
Out of the Realme, to be confound:
His out falset snarde him in net,
His deed to himself did redound.

The seven Sages.

But who would make an happy pake,
See falset therein be not found:
Lawtie and right shoves ay the right,
On greedinesse set not your ground.

As to this King that lay in sieging,
And was so frayde for Peacock tiales:
And two bright swords, with some vaine words
Without more skaith his armie skailles,
His campe to raise and saw few faes
I think they were but sniffing snailles,
The Potingar takes little care
To cure the man that nothing ailes.

A King should ay, at such essay,
Have a sad counsell him beside:
Perchance a fray may make him pray:
And cause him flee, when he should bide:
Dast vanities grounded with lies.
At all times he should let overslide,
Be circumspect, and in his neck,
Ay have an eye all times and tide.

Hasty credence doth great offence,
If it be in a Conquerour:
Right well should he avised be,
To every tale to give answer.
To treat his Lords, as well accords,
Then they will serve him with honour:
With blyth visage, cause pay his wage,
He shall triumph and be victour.

Had he so done, not half so soon,
He had not been so lightly chaist:
But the Doctour upon the towre,
Made him out of his minde almaist.

Captaines

The seven Sages.

Captaines and Kings take heed to such things,
See to all trattles ye give no traist:
For if ye do, it will come to,
As to the King that saw the ghaist.

A reproach to the Emprice.

GOmorras graceles guide, & Sodoms shamles seed
Thou Belials butter bird, both false in word & deed
Thy boast thou blows on breadsh shall not save thee I say
Thine arse burne in a gleeed, I think to see some day,
Thou shalt not so away, thou common curst cowclink,
Trowes thou to scape, nay, nay, I rather never drinke,

The tale of the fixt Master.

VPon a time there was in Romes town,
An Emperour of great might and renown:
Who had great Kings into his companie
Lords, Basons, Knights of great nobilitie,
Doing service, as could them best effect,
Some for pastime, and some to stuffe his war.
He had three knights whom he loude over the lake
In all affaires more credence to them gave.
Another knight there was in the city,
That had wedded a luttie gay Lady:
As ye had done your Princesse and your wife,
Whom he loved as well as his own life:
This Lady could make merie, sing and dance,
In company she could make good pastance,
Wanton young men even for that samine cause:

The seven Sages.

To her ludging all time of day she drawes,
And at all times she sang so wonder sweet,
That every man that pass upon the street:
Had great pleasure of her dulce melodie,
And causde each man covet her company:
She sang so sweet, so curious and clear,
And had delite her singing soz to hear.
And so came by one of the Knights thre,
That the Emperour lob'd so inwardly,
And heard her singing with voyce so curious,
Trowde well she was a Lady amorous:
He blent about, and in place where she sat,
Incontinent he was tane in the net:
Of lusts rage, and of that Ladie fair,
Even still he stood, and past no furthermare:
While that he got in her house enterie,
And soz a time booz there good companie.
So at the last he fell in communing,
With this Lady of love, and such talking,
So inwardly at her he did enquire,
What she should have, and fulfill his desire,
And sleep with him but the space of a night,
She asked him an hundred florens bright:
He said, Lady, I will gibe you no lesse,
Shew me the time thereto when I shall dresse,
She said, Good sir, at time convenient.
When I think time, ye shall be after sent:
So instantly that night he did depart,
And of his tress was very blith in heart:
Belæving sure that she should soz him send,

But

The seven Sages.

But small he knew how all would come to end.
So on the morn she sang into her bower,
Came the next knight pertained the Emperour:
Saw this Lady and heard her voice so swet,
Took great langour while he could with her met
And so he did and shew to her his minde,
Unto the which she was right well inclinde:
Who promise her of good fflowens fife scoze
She said, good sir, of you I aske no more:
He said Lady, when shall I trust thereto
A good due time I shall provide (quoth she)
So he as then departed merilie,
Trusting his trust in all thing well should be:
On the third day, the third knight in likewise
Came to her house, and the same enterpryse
He took on hand and heght to this Lady,
fifelscoze fflowens of him she should have ready:
For to perform and satisfie his will,
She was content, and granted well theretill.
When I should come (quoth he) I would ye shew
I shall send word (quoth she) as I am true,
So all these thre had gotten her consent,
But none of them knew yet others intent:
Then this Lady of all malice replat,
To her husband she said into secret,
Secret matters I have to you to shew:
But yet alone, no person must it know:
And if ye will the samine take on hand,
For great profite to us both it will stand
And will reliebe us of all pouerty,

The seven Sages.

In time comming, and libet in honestie.
He said, good Dame I can well keep counsell,
Of any thing that ye will to me tell,
To keep counsell it pertaines to a man,
But by contrare is no woman that can,
Of their counsell I read once in a tale
It is comparde to butter in hote kale.
Yet not the lesse the sooth if ye will shew,
What euer it be, there is no man shall know:
Noth he, it is a thing of verity,
That may us hold aye still in honestie,
Shew me said he, and I shall keep counsell
Of all secrets that ye will to me tell.
At my power the same I shall fulfill,
Therefore shew forth if that it be your will:
Noth he, good sir, there hath ben knights thre
Here diuerse times desiring love of me,
And promise me but doubt a good propine,
Eachone of them fife score of flozens fine:
At sundry times eachone come quietly,
Not one knowing of others priuity.
Could we this gold unknown get in our hand,
Into great need but doubt it should us stand.
Then said the knight, Dame ye say verity,
But of good zeal tell on how that can be.
She said good sir, my counsell you shall hear,
How ye shall do, the way I shall you lear,
I promise them every man by him self,
When they should come, the time I should them tell
In the same time at the gate ye shall stand,

Right

The seven Sages.

Right quietly with your drawn sword in hand,
And when they come into their order sa,
Ye shall not faile all thre them for to sla:
So thre hundred florens we shall obtain,
And none shall know, nor yet the knights be sent
Whom to he said, O my beloved wife,
Should I for gold take any man his life.
To do such thing of God I stand such aw
And als it is contrare to the kings law,
And I dout not if such a thing were done.
Withontten doubt it should be known soon.
Douth she fear not, the deed I take on hand,
To end it out peartly thereat shall stand,
And when he heard the tale then that she told:
It made the man more hardie and more bold.
So by counsell of this ill wifes intent,
She canse this knight to that daughter consent,
This ill woman when commed was the night:
Incontinent she sent for the first knight,
But more abode unto the gate came he,
As he thought best knocked full quietly.
Then answered she and at him could she spear,
Have ye not brought an hundred florens here,
But doubt said he I have them here present.
Then she unlockt the gate incontinent,
As he came in and entred at the gate:
Then her husband such a strake on him set,
Without more talk but shortly with his sword,
Gave him such wape, that he spake never word.
With the second he did the samine guise.

And

The seven Sages.

And with the thirde he playde on the same wise,
To a secret chamber their bodies drezew,
That none should know that he any man slew,
Then said he, Dame if their bodies be found,
Within this place, or yet within the ground:
It shall not faile, but we theretoze shall die:
The most vilde dead that can imagined be.
They will be mist into the court but doubt,
And will be sought in all these parts about:
She said, good sir, this work first I began,
To end that same right wonder well I can:
My so fear not, as I have said befoze
For I can dresse such thing if it were moze.
This Lady had into this same city,
A gentleman, and her bzother was he.
Within the town the guiding had to keep,
Overall the watches that they should no way slep.
So on the night as he past thzough the street,
At her own gate her bzother could she meet,
A secret thing (quoth she) my dear bzother,
I must shew you, as now unto none other:
When entred he and the knight her husband,
Welcomed him well, and took him by the hand:
Talked at length and merily drank the wine,
And then the knight said to her bzother syne:
Brother said he I heartly you enquire,
Of your counsell right greatly I desire
To have the same, for hereof I have need,
Her bzother said, truly so God me speed:
At my power my counsell and good thought.

The seven Sages.

Ye shall not want, and therein doubt ye not.
She said, Brother, this is the verie case,
Yesterday last there came unto our place
Unknown to us an honest noble knight,
Whom we entreated the best manner we might:
And so by chance he fell in argument,
Whereat mine husband took nothing content:
At last he ran so high in villanie,
What would ye more? my husband caused him die:
And still he lyes into our chamber hid,
To no persons as yet is known this deed:
And we have none to do for us as now
This great matter for to conuoy but you.
If he be found with us, as chance may be,
It will not faile but doubt we shall both die.
And she made mention but of one knight,
Not shewing him the veritie nor right.
Her brother said, Delyber him to me,
I shall him bear in a sack to the sea:
She hearing that was very blith and glaid,
Delibered him the dead knight as she said:
And to the sea the hie way he is past
With the dead knight, and therein did him cast.
This being done, to his sister he said,
Ye are now quite of yon, therefore be glad:
As ye desired this matter now is drest,
Now fill the wine, let us drinke of the best.
What shall ye have, quoth she, with merrie chear,
With all our hearts the best that we have here:
To the chamber in all haste past she soon,

The seven Sages.

As it had bēen for to haue brought him wine,
 And then begouth with a loud voice to cry,
 O dear bꝛother, right wonder fraide am I:
 The samine knight that yē kest in the sea
 In our chamber again is come to me.
 When her bꝛother thereof had great marvell,
 When that he heard his sister so him tell,
 And I trust that there cannot be such thing,
 Yet not the lesse again to me him bring,
 I shall him put he shall not come again,
 But still for ay I know he shall remain.
 He bound him fast into another seck,
 With a great stone hanging about his neck,
 The next knight took, believing that it was
 The first dead knight, and to the sea can passe:
 Upon his back he heeld him also right,
 And there but moze casts in the second knight.
 Then came he home to his sister, and said,
 No moze yē shall with yon knight be affraid:
 For he is cast into the sea so far,
 That well I know he shall never come nar.
 Therefore fill wine, and let us drinke about,
 For of yon knight I put you out of doubt:
 To her chamber to fetch wine she did faſtne,
 With a loud voice she cride fraidly again,
 O my bꝛother, the knight (I say you ſure)
 Whom yē did dꝛown is in my chamber ſure:
 Who be to me? I know not what to say,
 For by no mean he will not bide away.
 Her bꝛother heard, and said, What devil is this?

What

The seven Sages.

That verie knight he is some witch I wish,
I have him drownd two sandie times but doubt,
And ay again he of the sea comes out:
Yet the thirde time deliver him to me,
And I no moze shall cast him in the sea:
But I shall burn his bones into a fire.
Brother, said she, the same thing I desire:
Then she delivered the last knight of the thre,
And he belov'd it was the first truely:
So the thirde knight away with him hath tane,
Knowing nothing but all thre had been a one,
Without the towne a mile from the citie
In a forrest a great fire bigged he:
And the thirde knight he cast therein to burne,
Beloving well he had done a great turne,
That put away the verie instrument,
That was able his sister to have sent.
This dead knight burnt, that other did him speed,
As becomes all to do his naturall dead,
Up from the fire he hath a bow-shot space,
Into the wood to do such businesse:
And so it chanced that samine very night
Came through the wood riding another knight,
Which had a trypt the moone in that citie
At a jussing there him behov'd to be:
For wearinesse was both hungrie and cold,
He blent about, and the fire could behold,
Him to refresh thither he went thereto,
But he knew not what had been there ado,
He lighted down, ty'd his horse to a tree,

bat

D 2

And

The seven Sages.

And to the fire incontinent past he,
 To warm his hands, and to comfort his coyle,
 And soz a while to rest his tired hoyle.
 Then the same knight that was the toomans brother
 Came to the fire again, and saw another
 Stand at the fire, whom to he said on hy,
 What may thou be? he said, A knight am I.
 Quoth he again, I know thou art no knight,
 Thou art a devil that well I wot full right:
 Twise I thee drownd the first time in a leek,
 The second time a great stone at thy neck:
 And now thirdly I burnt thee in this fire,
 And yet to live I think thou wilt not tire:
 Where thou the devil, and als the devils dame,
 Ere I were combyed so with thee as I am:
 I rather burn thee ten times in a fire,
 Thy hoyle, thy self, both thy bowk, bones, and lire:
 As he so said, in his armes he him took,
 In mids the fire he kest him in the smok:
 And then his hoyle above him also kest,
 So burnt them both ere ever he took rest:
 To his suster then came he home again,
 What him betide he told to her in plain.
 All the best wine, quoth he, and spare it nought,
 For without doubt right dear I have it bought:
 When in the fire that I had burnt him once,
 Incontinent he stands up bowk and bones
 Before the fire, and his hoyle him bestro.
 What devil, said I, me think thou shapest to ride:
 So in the fire I kest him hoyle and all,

The seven Sages.

All this sister, sa' he, chanced mee befall,
Then in her m' de she kest incontinent
That he had burnt a knight of to2nement:
Yet not the lesse she bzought him the best wine,
Drank merily, and so past his way syne:
Not long after this wife and her own knight
Fell in debate by chance upon a night,
And she gabe him some wo2ds outragious,
High and halting, and verie despitous,
Wherethzough he grew with her in matalent,
Two stripes o2 thzæ so bath hee to her sent.
Then said his wife, thief, wilt thou murder mee,
As thou hast done the Emperours knights thzæ?
Thou serbest well to be hanged and dzawn,
If such things were unto our neighbours knawen.
Neighbours about these cruell wo2ds did hear,
The rumour rose, the folk grew all in fear,
Wo2d went with speed unto the Emperour,
They were sent for but any delatour,
Who were accusd of such a cruell crime,
Soon they confest the deed, the houre, the time
How he murdered the Emperours knights thzæ,
Within the night into great crueltie,
And how that they spoiled from every knight
Fibescore flozens of gold that was so bzight,
And how that she the matter first invented,
And how that he thereto first dissented:
So were they both condemned by the law,
That officers at horse-tailes should them dzaw
To the gallons out thzough the whole cite,

The seven Sages.

To their great shame that each man might it see,
On the gallows they were put both to dead,
As they deseru'd but mercie or remead.

The Master said unto the Emperour,
Deseru'd they not death that did so great murder.

The Emperour said, that wife was wonder evil,

By appearance was tempted with the devil.

She was the first that nature moou'd and bred,

Likewise the first the famine caus'de outspred.

The Master said, worse shall come to your self,

Slay ye your son for your ill wifes counsell.

My son, said he, for that ye now haue said,

There shall no charge of death be to him laid,

As for this day therefore passe to your place.

The Master said, God save your noble grace,

So took his leaue, and with a merrie heart

To his own house from the court did depart.

When the Emperes of these things heard tell
She was most like for to haue slaine her self,

As a wood wife came to the Emperour,

Behold, said she, a woman of dolour,

Except that ye mee sooner get remead,

I shall but doubt mine own self put to dead:

I am so shame'd with the countrie about,

That I thinke shame of my chamber come out,

And no remead, what euer I do or say

But with false tales put off from day to day:

Fie upon you that suffers such a thing,

Ye are not worth to be Emperour nor king,

The seven Sages.

Y^e cure no shame, y^e cure no worlds wonder,
To have mee shame, and to be put at under:
And to bee shame, and cald an Emperours wife,
I shall rather my self fall on a knife:
The pain of death indures but half an hour,
But evermore shame shall degrad honour.
The Emperour said, I pray God you defend,
That y^e take not such an unhappie end,
To take in thought your self for to sla,
What ever y^e do I pray you do not sa:
And I pray God that I not causer bee
Of such mischance, nor such adversitie:
But while y^e thole; and suffer a little while,
Your cause will come to a far better stile,
And your complaint will have the better end,
Your iust quarrell ever I shall defend.
Quoth she again, The end shall not be good,
Both you and mee it shall us both exclude
Of this impire, and put us to confussion,
Yon seven masters lead us to such abusyon,
That it shall chance to you here after ward,
As it came to the king and his steward.
The Emperour said, I pray you not to saile
Of your goodnesse swyth to mee tell that tale.
She said, My Lord, to tell that tale again
Well I perceave it will bee but in vain,
For the next day the seventh Easter will come,
And tell a tale to save your son that's dumb,
And help him as his fellows did before,
For they have done y^e will hear me no more,

The seven Sages.

On the eight day then shall your own son come,
And tell his tale which this long time was dumb,
To whose talking ye shall give such pleasure,
That I shall be put forth of your memorie,
And the great love betwixt us two hath been
In time coming now shall be forgot clean.
The Emperour said, Such a thing cannot be,
Without ye serve the same unwitting me,
Which I believe was never in your thought,
Wherefore as yet such thing trow will I nought.
The Emperesse said, When shall I tell my tale,
Which to your grace it shall greatly availle,
And cause you from great perills to eschew,
Which I perceive is else prepared for you
By your curst son, and his seven masters all,
Which after this right well perceive ye shall.
The Emperour said, Now I pray your goodnesse
Tell forth your tale, and leave that businesse:
So she began her tale with fained chear,
Not blith at heart as ye shall after hear:
But ere she tell her tale forth to the king
Of the last tale yet let us say some thing.

MORALITAS.

O Mercie God, what thing is this,
This matter great it marvels mee,
That cunning clarks can not discusse
The ill and the iniquitie
That into women been
Bred with great tray and teen,

The

The seven Sages.

The great deceit and subtiltie,
Suck keenesse with great crueltie
Was never heard nor seen.

This Ladie in her window set,
Singing her notes so curious,
Pretenting there the devils net,
Under colour so cautelous,
Young men are to her gane,
And in her net are tane,
And she with minde malicious
Causd murder them ilkane.

This murther then she did invent,
That causde these men for to be slain:
Then was the verie instrument
First for to make it known again:
So many wayes she fand,
For to tyft her husband
To do mischief with such false train,
And then the same she could not lain,
But made it known fra hand.

Through her malice and her envie,
Both of her husband and her sell:
The cruell murther she did outery,
Whereof neighbours had great marvell,
Which thing they never knew,
While that the wife it shew,
And caused her the truth to tell,
How all the matter first befell,
And how the knights they slew.

Who were punishd for their misdeed,
And got the rigour of the law:
Now, sirs, perceive what doth proceed
Of an ill womans saw,
Whooredome was first in plain,

Then

The seven Sages.

Then greedinesse but lane,
To wone the woman as yee know,
The gold and slaughter did on draw,
And cauld both men bee slain.

Therefore say yee that have wives,
Let them not all your secrets know,
For if it chance that they two strives
All that she knowes that will she shew,
And rather more than lesse,
They have that use expresse,
For if yee lend them once a blow,
Quite old friendship they let saw,
Turnes all to wickednesse,

As did this wife in great malice,
Her husband and her self pur down,
Through her counsell and coverice.
To hid the same had no reasoun,
What thing yee would have hid,
That to your wife forbide,
And it were never so great treasoun,
That she shall tell through all the town,
As this wicked wife did.

The wiseman sayes their tongues are sharp
As any sword is wrought with hand,
Wherewith so crouslie they do carp,
Each word they say alone shall stand:
They are so outragious,
Wrathfull and despitous,
They cure not the wag of a wand
To cause you tine both life and land,
When they grow furious.

God save my self from such a sort,
For I perceive they are perilous,
I promise you it is no sport,

The seven Sages.

To finde your unfriend in your house :
Whether it be hee or sho,
To tell all that I do,
And they be bold and boasteous,
So cumberfome and malicious,
I can not tell whereto.

A laud or praise to the sixth Doctour.

THy golden tongue with grace so hast thou guided,
That to this childe yet life thou hast provided,
Contrare the queen, a vengeance on her corse,
But without doubt ere sentence bee decided
I know the childe boldly he will abide it:
For why? he knowes both the best and the worse:
And if so bee the queen must bide on force,
Yet not the lesse thou should have thanks but doubt,
Thou good Master, that kept thy day about.

The seventh tale of the Empresse.

BEfoze this time there was a noble king,
That lov'd his wife aboue each earthly thing,
Hæ had to her so great love and labour,
Hæ kepted her each day within closour,
In the great house of a strengthie castell,
Whereof the keyes he kepted ay him self:
Whereat this Ladie took great heavinesse,
That she was holden into great straitnesse,
Wanted solace, and all good companie,-

But

The seven Sages.

But when the king came in allanerly,
In other parts there was a noble knight,
It chanced him to dreame into the night,
Into his slep he thought well that he saw
The fairest thing that ever man did know,
Whose love he covet aboue each earthly thing,
If he might see on her the earth walking:
Nothing doubting but by her come should hee
To great honour, worship, and honestie.
The same Queén that night in vision
Dreame of this knight, and on this same fashion,
And yet neither of other knew the name,
Nor knowledge had by fashion or by same.
This knight he rose up on the morne early,
Remembred well on this dreame sickly,
And determed into his minde and thought
That by no manner way rest would hee nought,
Unto the time that Ladie while he fand,
If she might be gotten in any land,
Lap on his horse, and in haste forth he rode,
To seek his quén no longer tarte made,
Through royal realms, and diverse great countries,
Through rich regions, and seemly fair cities,
This fair Ladie yead so far in his thought,
There was no lands for her he left unsought:
While at the last he came to a citie,
Where he got wit there was a fair Ladie
Keeped so close, that none might come her till,
Except alone it were the kings own will:
There he sojourned for his pastime a space,

Dim

The seven Sages.

Him to refresh in mirth and merrynesse.
So it fortuned to him upon a day
Passe by this place where that this Ladie lay,
In her window looking forth her alone,
For other game and pastime got she none:
So she chanted soon for to get a sight
Whom of she dreame, of this same vertie knight,
Thinking right well the samine man was hee
Into her dreame before that she did see:
Hee not knowing that the Ladie was there,
But by chance came down by making repaire:
In mean season he lifted up his eye,
In her window this Ladie can hee see,
Thinking right well it was the samine Queene
That he before into his dreame had seen.
Then he began to sing a song of love,
Which when she heard greatly it did her move
Unto his love, and printed in her heart,
Which was unknown to him in any part:
Yet not the lesse dayly hee made repaire,
About this place to take pastime and aire.
Then this Ladie perceiuing this at all,
A bill of love to him she let down fall:
And he in haste read over this prettie bill,
Perceiuing well this noble minde and will:
From this time forth he used dayly iusting,
Breaking of spears, and also horse running,
Casting of stone, and also the leaden melle,
Wrestling and leaping he did exerce him self,
Dayly such acts he vnde, and honest dares,

The seven Sages.

That in the court his fame and word upspreads,
While at the last his name and good bearing,
And honest acts were shewn unto the king;
The king hearing his valiant tozament,
He sent for him message incontinent,
Who charged him the king he should come till,
To hear his minde, his pleasure, and his will:
Who came to him with all humillie,
As him efford, low kneeling on his knee.
Sir knight he said, I have heard of you tell
How in good acts ye have exercd your sell
Into my court, amongst my gentlemen,
Wherefore sith I such acts do of you ken,
Please ye remain into our companie,
Ye shall have gifts and good reward of mee,
And be one of my guard and my counsell,
So it please you with us remain and dwell.
Then said the knight, and please your Majestie
To have service of such a man as mee,
I shall you serve both with mine hand and heart,
In all affaires such as pertaines my part,
Without reward or any recompense,
So that I may dayly have your presence:
And since your grace hath now desired mee
Into your guard, and on your counsell bee,
I would your grace to my desire would grant,
So on service the better I might hant,
A new lodging to have at the towres side,
Where I might bee, and at your bidding bide,
That your grace needed upon mee call,

The seven Sages.

Y^e might cause cry out o^{er} the castle wall.
Then said the king, faith I consent thereto,
Go big your house as y^e think best to do.
Then pass the knight ere ever he would tire,
And feed workmen, and promise them good hire:
His house was bigge with timber, stone, and thack,
With a Mason he made a deere contract,
Out from his house to make a small passage
Into the towre where this queen was in cage.
When this was done after his own intent,
The same Mason he kild incontinent,
That he should not discover his secree,
For his reward this workmen that got hee.
Then went this knight when he list to the queen
In secret sort, and with no man was seen,
Dio her service as could him well effier,
When they talked of diverse matters seer:
Amongst the rest he spake to her of love,
Which in a part her heart did greatly move,
Howbeit as then she was not well contented,
Yet afterward to his will she consented:
So in her thought the queen kest on a day
Of this matter what she should do or say,
Touching the knight, and als her own husband,
Be such thing, then banishing the land,
To my tinfill, and ever worlds shame,
For upon mee would be laid all the blame,
Because that I would not the knight discure,
I shall be cald the ill woman full sure:
Also the knight hee shall escape no way,

But

The seven Sages?

But of the death the tharp he shall essay:
 Wherefore is best, and I perceave my self
 To hold my tongue, and not away to tell:
 And so all times when they two pleasd to met,
 By this deryn way they went to their secret:
 When afterwarde the king gave him a ring,
 Which at wedlock he receiv'd from the king:
 Great toznaments this knight he also dayly,
 And ever boozed away the daye:
 Wherethrough he won both in court and in king,
 In great labour, for his many having,
 Into so far, that he was afterward
 Made by the king controller and steward:
 And all his realm he had in regiment,
 Took in his males, great summes, and dayly rent:
 Upon a day it did appease the king
 For his pleasure to passe unto hunting:
 To his steward the king gave then command
 To be ready, and passe with him fra hand:
 Upon the moyn then all the court uprose,
 And with the king all to the hunting goes.
 All the day long they chace in the foze, rest,
 While the king thought they wold have had some rest
 For he was tircd, and wearte all by gane,
 So he repolde beside a faire fountain:
 Then his steward where he sat with the king
 After travell he fell upon sleeping:
 And so the king perceived at the last
 The Queens own ring upon his finger fast,
 Which the knight knew by countenance of the king
That

The seven Sages.

That he had seen and marked that each ring,
Then to the king with fained countenance:
He said, my Lord, this is the very chance,
A maladie hath tane me in this tide,
I am so sick no more hunting can bide:
Unlesse I get the sooner some reward,
I doubt right soze that it shall be my dead.
Praying your grace that ye would grant me liue,
For to passe home, your grace not for to grieve,
Quoth he good friend, if ye please to passe home
I grant you leaue, passe on in Gods name:
Incontinent he leapt upon his horse,
Faining himself to haue a sickle colse.
Home to his house into all haste he rode,
And to the Queen he past withoutten bode:
Without processs delivered her the ring,
That she before had gotten from the king,
And told her how the king the same did know,
On his finger, on day when he him saw,
Beseeching her if that the kings grace
Ask'd for the ring within short time or space
She would him show the same but question,
For to exlude ill word and suspicion:
This being done, he past his priuie way,
And to his bed he made him but delay.
The hunting done, the king came home at euen,
Incontinent he said unto the Queen:
Where is the ring in wedlock I you gave,
Shew me the same, for I the same must haue,
She said, my Lord, so soon to what intent?

The seven Sages.

Would ye it for no way it is absent,
 When said the King show me incontinent,
 O I sweare you ye shall it soze repent.
 Then up the rose and to her cosser went,
 And brought the ring to him incontinent:
 When he it saw he was right wonder glad,
 And half ashamed unto the Queen he said,
 Madame forsooth since first I was born,
 So like a ring by workmen made of thorn.
 To the knights ring and yours I never saw,
 I would have swozn but that now I do know
 Both had been one that coulde me ask your ring,
 She said my Lord beleve ye such a thing:
 Nay, nay Madame, I cry you now mercy,
 For well I know such thing there cannot be.
 She said my Lord take not such thing in thought:
 For the same man perchance your ring wrought
 Hath made the knights and on the sametime soze:
 Quoth he Madame I said it but in sport,
 Quoth she my Lord God mot grant you pardon,
 If ye me had in any suspicion:
 God forgiue your ill suspicious minde,
 If ye suspect in any sort of kinde:
 Considering of your castle the strength,
 And my lawtte ye have known at the length,
 And then your self had the keyes in keeping,
 I marvell how ye can suspect such thing.
 Quoth he Madame I pray you take patience,
 I said nothing for to do you offence,
 But as ye know desire my ring to see,

which

The seven Sages.

Which now again ye shall receiue of me,
With all good will as euer I it gabe.
He said my Lord the same I will receaue:
So afterward ye suspect me no way,
He said Madame that shall I not persey.
After this time the knight caused prelar
In his own house a banquet of dinner:
Then to the King he said and please your grace,
This is the truth the very cause and race:
My bedfellow is come from her countrie,
Which thought right long my presence for to see:
To her I cause a dinner to prepare,
With all my heart I would your grace were there:
And please your grace to do me such honour,
Surely he said I will do your pleasure.
In that behalf and it were meekle more,
The knight he knelde and thanked him therefore,
Then in his heart he was right wonder glad,
For the kind words that the King to him said:
Then past he to the Queen incontinent,
By his derne Cade the hie way is he went.
And said Madame and please you take such pains
Into mine house to dyne with your soveraigne
The samine pay and cloth you up richlye,
As is the use and guise of my countrie:
And sit thereat at table with the King,
Euen as ye were my wife spousde with a ring.
And make him all the pastime and good cheer,
As to his grace in best sort can esteere.
He said sir knight as ye please so I will.

The seven Sages.

As best I can your pleasure to fulfill.
The hours became and dinner time of day,
To the knights house, the king came on the way,
In the meane time the Quēn came her dorn gate
In the knights hall belibe the gote her seat:
In such clothing as the knight gave command,
After the guise and fashon of his land,
And when the king came to the knights haw:
So soon as he the Ladies visage saw
He thought she was woman likest his Quēn,
Since he was bozne that ever he saw with ene,
Yet not the lesse; eachone on their maner,
They hailed other as could them best effere:
Then to the knight the king said quietlie,
What is she this so seemly for to see?
The knight he said, and please your majestie,
This is forsooth my love and my lady:
Who of long time from me hath been absent,
But now I am of her comming content:
So that ye be content that she is here,
I am (said he) so God grant me good cheare
And first they walk, and then to table went,
And evermoze the king in his intent:
Thought that he knew the Quēn & had knowledge,
By her fashon, her forme and her visage,
And to himself he said in all his life,
He never saw woman more like his wife:
Yet not the lesse the strength of his own towze,
Deceived his minde and led him in error
That in so far, he gave far more credence.

The seven Sages.

To the knights words and coloured eloquence,
Than to the thing he saw with his own eene:
Which blindly caused him to misknow the Queen
When she began to talk of some gladnesse,
And stir the king up in some merinesse,
So soon as he heard her speech and her voyce:
Whether to speak or for to hold him close,
He not well wist but yet said to himself
O Lord, in heauen, here is a great marvell,
This woman is in fashion and savour
In speech, in voice, makdome and portraiture,
In behaviour and als in conditions,
In forme in face, in maners and fashions,
And in all sort so done like mine own Queen.
In all this world was never liker seen.
And yet the strength of the towre him beguilde,
With the knights words that him so stieply tyde:
So at the meat with merinesse among,
The knight desired the Queen to sing a song,
Then she began to sing a song of love,
The king hearing greatly his heart can move.
Said to himself, and this be not my wife,
I know she is not living upon life,
And then again he thought that can not be,
For my self in keeping have the key:
Of the great towre where no man can come in,
But I my self that keepes both key and gin,
That no man can enter within that towre,
Except my self neither by time nor houre.
So all dinner he sat in such conceit,

which

The seven Sages.

With his own self into such strange debate,
And so he fate and wist not what to say:
And at the last he bade soon take away
The table and cloath, he would no longer bide,
He said he would about the fields ryde.
Then said the knight, and please your noble grace
For to remain a pretty litle space:
We shall you make more merrynesse and cheer,
For without doubt your grace is welcome here.
Then said the Quen, and please your majesty,
For to remain with us in company:
We shall you make then merynesse and sport,
All that we can to hold you in comfort,
Such like as doth the Quen in her solace,
With all service that we can do your grace:
For all request plainly the king said nay
For to remain cause he take the table away,
And said he was into that same ryde,
In such haste he might no longer bide:
And so the cloath and table away was tane,
Up rose the king and to the foor is gane.
Thanked the knight of his kindnesse and cheer,
The lady als into the best maner:
Then in all haste to the Castle he went,
To see the Quen if she was there present,
And then the Quen went on her pryvie way,
Kest off her cloathes and her uncouth array.
And when the king entred within the towre,
He found the Quen sitting into her bowre:
In the same cloathes and sozt as he her left,

where

The seven Sages.

Wherethrough he was in his speech half bereft:
When he her saw he brack'd her twice o' th'ise,
And said Madame I am in a fanisie,
This day I dy'd with the knight as ye know,
And with his love the which I never saw:
So like to you by fozme o' by fashon
By speech and voice and als condition,
All dinner time I was so Mirred in thought,
That I wist not if it was ye o' nought:
And ay my minde it was in such dispare,
I knew not well if ye were here o' there:
Then said the Queen I marvell of your minde,
That to such thing your heart should be inclinde:
For ye know well the great strength of your towre
As to the keyes they are at your pleasure.
And my body ye know hath no credence,
To come o' gang without your own licence:
And as ye know to fle I have no wings,
How can ye then imagine such like things?
What kind of way is possible to me,
For to be in your knights companie:
If ever ye read the book of Philomile,
Wherein ye may right well read and espie:
That it may stand o'be to belike another,
Howbeit that one be not sibbe to the other:
Therefore my Lord, if you require on right,
Have no respect bestwixt me and you knight.
Then said the king, forsooth that shall not be,
I grant my self into this fault guilty:
Into so far as I misdeamed you,

There

The seven Sages.

There is no cause such thing to think I trow.
Then said the Queen, sitte guiltie ye you grant,
I you forgive so such thing ye not hant.
Upon the mozne the knight said to the King,
And please your grace ye will grant me one thing
This long ago I have you done ser vice.
The best I could pertaining mine office,
Ye see my love is come from her countrie,
For to returne homeward to cause me:
And I intend (if it be your pleasure,
Unto my love ye would do such honour)
To marie her in face of holy churk,
As God commands all christian men to work.
To be at home called my lawfull wife,
While dolefull death do part us from this life.
Beseeching to your noble Grace theretofore,
For my reward as now I ask no more:
But with your hand deliver her to me,
Before the priest, that the people may see:
It will be cald to me a great honour,
So that it be your Graces own pleasure.
Where that my wife was given me by a King,
In our countrie will be cald a great thing.
In such affaires as is the old fashion,
Unto Wedlock when twosome makes them boson,
Then said the King, your reward is too small,
That ye desire or charges me withall.
That I do that right gladly for your sake,
And for her sake that now should be your make,
The knight thanked the King a thousand tyme:

That

The seven Sages.

That answerde him so kindly in such wise;
The marriage and day of the banquet.
The King himself coulde devise and set,
On the which day the King with great honour,
Came to the church to do the King pleasure:
The parish priest with his churchly vestments,
Was well indued in all abillments:
For to solempne the band of marriage,
Into the church as then was the usage,
In this mean time the Knight coulde make ready
In his own house his love and his Lady:
Well all clad up after the consuetude,
Of his countrie which he thought was most good.
And coulde two Knights her to the church conboy
With great blithnesse, solemnitie and soy:
For all beloude his Paramour she had been,
Notweist she was indeed their natthe Queen,
Then said the Priest, the which was his dutie:
Who deliberes this woman now to me?
That I again may give her to this Knight,
In face of church, and of the peoples sight:
Then said the King, that shall I do becom,
Because she is so wonder like my Queen
I love her all the better by my life.
Her face and labour is so done like my wife,
As is the use of killing of such bands:
The King he took his own wife by the hands,
And to the Priest he gave this Lady bright
The Priest again gave her unto the Knight:
Of holy church after the old fashion,

Then

The seven Sages.

Then he began to read his oration,
Upon his book right busily can be say,
The band complet he made between them two.
This being done the knight said to the king,
Sir ye have done to me a kindly thing:
With your own hand that hath delibered me,
This noble woman before this companie,
My ship wherein we purpose to passe hame,
Is ready now floting on the same,
And he would faine with your graces licence,
We were furdzed home ward for to passe hence,
My mariners they are in readinesse:
To take up sailes and to the sea them dresse,
Therefore I would your noble majestie:
With ye have shewn so great kindnesse to me,
Unto my ship ye would my wife convoy,
For she therefore would have great mirth and joy:
Considering she is now to depart,
It would her be great comfort at the heart.
And als I would ye gave her good counsell,
All men liking for to forsake all haille:
But now alone which is her own true knight,
And married her into your graces sight,
Then said the king, all such is right goodly;
The married wife obedient to be,
To her husband, and all other refuse
I have no doubt but all such she will use:
Then went the king with all his company,
And to the ship convoyde that faire Lady,
And by the way his counsell he her shew,

That

The Seven Sages.

That he should be to her knight traitt and true,
Him to obey, and hold him in honour,
Lobe him alone aboue all creature:
And none liuing in her minde for to haue,
Whose counsell then I trust she did receiue:
Then the Quēn said, and please your maiestie,
This good counsell that ye haue told to me:
It shall be done, if it were ten times moze,
Quoth he Madame now I thank you therfore:
Praying to God your woorthip well conuoy,
So to your land that ye may come with ioy:
And then he took the Quēn first by the hand,
And then the knight which then was her husband:
And gaue them both his blessing where he stood,
Which to the Quēn as she thought was right good
For at that time she thought it was her part,
Notwith the king was blinded to the heart.
So first the Quēn and then the noble knight,
At this blind king either they took good night.
The king her kiss'd and bade farewell, adieu,
So like my wife (quoth he) I neuer knew:
And her fauour will cause me think on you,
When ye are past this truly ye may trow,
Then said the Quēn low kneeling on her knee,
I thank your grace that such thought takes on me.
Do I not so, when that we are come home,
And think on you I am right far to blame.
For great kindnesse and inward courtesie,
That ye haue done to your own knight and me,
This being done to ship they make passage

Entred

The seven Sages.

Entred in boord, and made for their boyage,
 Raised up Ancers and Cables in they dzeu,
 The winde was fair eben as they would it blew.
 Heled up sailles and to the sea they past,
 The skipper speeld with speed to the top-mast.
 To spy the weather, if tempest did appear,
 Into that case the sayles the lower bear,
 Within short time the ship was out of sight,
 So was the King both quite of Queen and Knight
 And then with speed the King homeward he went
 To his castle and found the Queen absent,
 If he was noyde and craved at the heart:
 I know be few of Court can tell his part.
 His face it swate, his feet and hands he shook,
 Upon no man with patience can he look.
 He sought the towre and spied all round about,
 If he could finde the gate where she came out.
 He found the hole and secret way at last:
 Where the Knight came, and where away she past.
 Then cryde he out, Full well-away, alace,
 Here is become a great mischivous cace:
 The Knight to whom I gave such confidence,
 Of love and labour by counsell and credence:
 On him alone I would have lippened my life,
 Now traitronly hath tane away my wife,
 I was a fool fulfild with fantasie,
 That gave more faith unto his words lie:
 Than I did ay to mine own saying eene,
 Wherethrough I want my bedfellow and Queen,
 And shamde for ay with lack and derision.

which

The seven Sages.

Which will me bring to greater confusion,
Considering well I had mine éne to see,
All men may well example take by me.

¶ The Emprice then said to the Emperour,
This tale I told, my Lord for your pleasure,
Would God the same that ye well understood
Then should ye be of all danger denude.

The Emperour said, Madame, so have I seie,
All that ye said, I understand right well.

Quoth she, my Lord remember how this Prince,
Unto this knight gave such perfect credence:

Als to his wordes greater credence he gave,
Than to his own éne so he did him deceave

In like maner unto these Masters seven,
Ye give more faith, than to great God of heaven;

By appearance for dayly ye may see:

What displeasure these seven would work on me,

He to destroy they labour night and day,

And ye give faith to each word that they say,

More than ye do to your own naturall éne:

Which hereafter both will be heard and seen.

Have you not seen how your Son rabe my face?

And yet ye gave scarce credence in that case:

Which yet beares still the markes as ye may see,

Whereof as yet I get no remedie:

And als ye know how he would have me shande,

Defylde your bed, wherethrough I was defamde,

All this became through his Masters defence:

Whom to ye gave such confirmed credence,

This ye marke not nor prints into your heart,

But

The seven Sages.

But it noyes me inwardly in a part.
 Therefore I doubt right sore that samine thing,
 Shall happen you as it did to this King.
 That gave credence while he was quite beguilde,
 So in your self with these same seven oversyld.
 He said I gibe to mine ene moze credence,
 Than to these seven for all their great science.
 Therefore the Poynt for all their tales and saws,
 My Son shall of judgement thole the laws:
 And on the Poynt his officers he cause call,
 Commanded them that they should forthwithall:
 Take out his Son and on the gallous him bring,
 That it were done befoze each other thing.
 Then such a noyse rose up in the city
 It for to hear it was a great pity:
 That the Emperour his own Son should cause Ra,
 Within that toton many heart it made wa.
 The seventh Paster heard tell of this tithand,
 To the sergants he basted him fra hand:
 Them for to meet in all good haste him sped,
 Where they the childe down thzough the city led:
 Noth he good friends heartly I you beseak,
 Tary a time while I the Emperour speak
 I trust in God ere I be far away,
 I shall his life from perill save this day.
 The officers they were right wonder glad,
 And did even so as the Paster them bades:
 To the Emperour he basted thzough the toton,
 And on his knees befoze him he fell down,
 Rendring him such reverence as accords:

The seven Sages.

Then after him to his Princes and Lords:
The Emperour with great indignation,
Vengeable vult and with brows casten down,
Said unto him all sorrow mot the fall,
Both unto thee and to thy fellows all:
A dumbe young childe ye seben unto me sent
Which spake right well when he unto you went.
Because ye seben have sent me such one hither,
Ye and ye shall be hanged all together.
The Maister said and please your noble grace,
From now to morne it is but a short space,
And then by noon with grace of God of heaven
Your son shall speak to and his Maister seben
Unto your grace we promise faithfullie
On paine of death first we all seben then be.
The Emperour said if I might that believe,
No longer then desire I for to live.
The Maister said I pray you bide so lang,
And if we faile all eight ye shall us hang.
Then openly ye shall know all the striffe,
And dissention betwixt us and your wife.
And if your grace will not do as I say,
Ye will repent right soze another day:
And shall happen to you perchance some night,
As it bechanc'd to a right courteous knight,
That died shortly as I in storie read:
For a small blood that hee sa w his wife blood:
To whom after she was right uncourteous,
And right unkind for all his great kindnesse:
The Emperour said Maister I you requite,

Tell

The seven Sages.

Tell me that tale right faine I would it hear.
The Maister said, cause call your son again,
The whole story I shall shew to you plaine.
In time comming induring all your life,
Ye shall eschew the shrewdnesse of your wife,
The Emperour said, I will call him again,
Conditionallie under the samine paine,
The Doyn ere soon, speak he not plainly,
First he, then ye together all shall die.
The Maister said, of that I am content,
The Emperour said, and thereto I consent,
Then caused he to call the childe again,
And the Maister told forth his tale in plaine,
But the Queens last tale further ere we go,
We will perceiue ere we tell any mo.

MORALITAS.

INto this tale right small I can perceiue,
To be extract of morall good sentence:
But that this Knight subtelie did deceave,
This Noble King that give him such credence,
In sundrie sorts shew him benevolence,
Then he again upon the other side
With great falset all his wayes did provide.

As to our Queen as she infers this tale,
To her purpose and to her own affaires:
As thinketh me, the matter tendeth hale,
To her shame as the tale it self declares,
For to tell forth plainly she not spares,
And to rehearse the whoredome that was hid,
Betwixt the Knight and Queen that they did.

Consider

The seven Sages.

Considering that they are queens baith,
Who can her quire such matters, to in bring?
If one hath shame it is the others skaith,
For to bee false to her husband the king,
Trow yee but our Empresse can do such thing,
Indeed I trow ere all our books are ended,
Yee shall perceive as far she hath offended,

If a Doctour into his sermon tell,
And reprove vice, great faults, or great error,
Of the same vice being guiltie him sell,
How shall he snib that vice with his honour?
He blots himself as he doth his neighbour,
Alwayes upon his own blanket he spits,
And his own tale hard on the haeles him hits.

Of my neighbour an ill tale if I tell,
Of blasphemie, dishonour, or yet shame,
It may perchance likewise come to thy sell,
Perhappen worse, bringing on as great blame,
How can I then in any sort defame
Mine own neighbour, except myself be clean,
Such things be considered and well seen.

Our own Empresse whom of that now wee speak,
She put reproach unto another queen:
But she may cast her cards in at the cleak,
Of the same sort though now such bee not seen,
As *Matthew* sayes, even so as now I mean,
From thine own eye first draw thou out the balk,
To thy neighbour then peartly may thou talke.

Therefore, I say, thou had need for to see,
Ere thou a fault into thy neighbour send;
Of such like faults see thou well purged bee,
Him to reprove ere that thou take on hand.

The seven Sages.

Else thy reproof with honour cannot stand,
It to obey there is few will bee able,
If that bee known in the same culpable.

How can a queen so foul a fact infer,
Contrare a queen, and shee her self guiltie:
In the same crime, yea, and perchance far war?
Howbeit it bee clocked more quyetly,
Fy on falset, fy on hid harlottie,
That an ill tale of thy neighbour canst tell,
And the same tale redounds even on thy sell.

A reproach or reprove to the Empresse.

THOU glaiked galler and queen now with a glorious glose,
With thy false tales of teen thou trows towin the hose:
Nay, nay, not so my ioyes, there is some graith to finde,
A prick into your nose ere we have done behinde:
Thinks thou to blow us blinde? there other tales to tell,
When stabled is all wnde look then who beares the hell:
The wrack shall on thy sell, both the sorrow and fite,
Thou Proterpine of hell, wee cure thee not a mite,
For all thy great despire hid over with harlotrie,
Full well wee shall thee quite, that all the world may see:
Thou bismeir bellamie, thine hips shall thole bote baisters,
For thou serves them truly at the childe and his masters.

The tale of the seventh Master.

VPON a time there was a noble knight,
That had a wife that was both fair and bright,
Whom he so loved, that by no way he might
Of the whole day an houre want of her sight:
Upon a time after meat and gladnesse,

The seven Sages.

For their pastime these two went to the chesse:
And in his hand it hapned him to have
His own by-knife, and so amongst the labe,
Whereon she strake her hand a little wye,
Almost a drop of blood that yee might see.
So soon as he the blood saw of his wife,
Alwayes he said that she would losse her life,
Befoze them all amongst them hee fell down
For very wo into a deadly swoon:
Incontinent then she began to cast
Upon his face cold water very fast:
Then he overcame within a little space,
The cold water they wap so on his face,
The Minister he could call of the town,
And prayed him to hear his confession:
For well hee knew without any remead
There was nothing for him but present dead,
For no sicknesse, nor for none other deid,
But only he saw his wifes finger blood.
The Minister exhorted him anone,
And soon after to death this knight is gone,
For whom there was great sturt and bewailing.
Amongst the rest his wife made most mourning:
The buriall with great solemnitie
Was made and done in best manner might be:
Then did this Ladie make a solemn vow
To live as still as doth the turtle dove,
All her lifetime to live in chastitie,
And never know any mans companie:
But as yet still upon her husbands grave,

The seven Sages.

And neber moze wo:ldly comfort to haue:
But ebermoze unto the day she die,
In that same grave while that she buried be.
Her friends said nay, that was not all the best,
With it please God her husband was at rest,
Bade her passe home, and cast her to defend
Her spouse & hairens, to mourn would nothing mend
Gibe to the poore, and let the dead hence go,
We think it best, quoth they, that ye do so:
Wee shall you do all comfort that wee can,
Then afterward to chuse you a new man;
Cast you to mirth, and let your mourning be;
For naturall is that all men once must die.
She said, Counsell of you none will I haue,
For I will die to dwel above this grave:
Consider, can ye not how for my sake
He soze sicknesse, and dulefull death did take:
For a small drop he saw my finger bleed,
Should I not then both into wo:rd and deed
On my person some pennance for to take?
The cruel death that suffered for my sake.
Therefore, good friends, ye put your mindes to rest,
For on this grave shall be my lodge and nest,
While God sunder my soul and life in tway,
Wherefore my friends from me passe home away.
Then her near friends hearing her outer minde,
Thought in some part they would with her inclind,
Becau e she was in start and great dolour,
Would cast them then some way to her pleasure,
And saw she would do nothing but her will,

where-

The seven Sages.

Wherefore they sought the same for to fulfill,
And caused to big even at the graves side
A proper lodge wherein that she might bide,
And furnished her all necessaries thereto
In all affaires, or what she had ado,
Blessing well she would change her intent,
And afterwards to work with friends consent:
Thinking right well that she would no way want
Sight of people, but she thereto would hant:
So they her left into her quiet cave,
Pourning right soze aboue her husbands grave.
There was a law then made in that cite,
If any man condemned was to die
On the gallous for trespassse and unright,
Then the shireffe should wake him all that night
In his harnesse the mozn while it were day,
So that the thiel should not be stoln away:
And if so were, the shireffe tine his land.
And als his life to be in the kings hand.
In this mean time it hapned that there was
A man hanged for his theft and trespassse:
Then the shireffe behov'd that night of force
All in armour to wake that hanged corse:
And so he did, howbeit the night was cold,
Where he watched there was no house nor hold.
It chanc'd that night to be both winde and rain,
That in no sort thereout he might remain,
For verie cold he stood of life such doubt,
And so beliv he blenked him about:
In the church-yard beside the knights own grave,

The sevenSages.

A little light the thireffe can perceave
 From the window where that the widowe lay,
 Whither he goes in all the haste he may:
 At the ludge doo; he knocked quietly,
 And soon she spake, and asked who may that bee
 This time of night to waken a poore widowe:
 Away, be gone. In heart right sorrowfoll
 He said, I am the thireffe of this town,
 For very cold I am in point to swoon,
 Except yee let mee in right hastily,
 For very cold doubtlesse I trow to die.
 If yee come in, quoth she, I fear right soze
 That yee will eake mine anguish moze and moze,
 Which were needlesse, sir, if yee knew my thought.
 Quoth he, Ladie, sorrow that shall I nought:
 I promise you neither in word nor deed
 You for to craib, therefore have you no dread.
 Then up she rose, and helpe let him in,
 For very cold he chebered at the chin.
 And down he sat, and warmed him at the fire,
 Which for to do was greatly his desire.
 Fra he was warmed, and rested there a space,
 Graithly he blent into the widowes face.
 Quoth he Ladie, to displease you no way,
 A word with leabe I would unto you say.
 She said, Good sir, say on what ever you please,
 For your sayings can do mee no offense.
 He said, Ladie, I marvell of your minde,
 To this pain work that yee should be inclinde,
 Considering yee are a faire Ladie,

Fresh

The seven Sages.

fresh in your floures, young, pleasant, and lustie,
It were more meet, and better by ten fold
For to passe home, and keep your own household,
Than here to bide, and your self to destroy,
Dayly in furt, in mourning, and in noy.
Anoth she, Good sir, if I your words had known,
O; that y^e should such sayings to me shoun,
y^e should not had into this houle entrie,
Because y^e talk of such purpose to me:
I say to you as I said of before
To all my friends, and I would y^e no more
Speak of these things, they sink not in mine head,
Know y^e not well mine husband suffered dead
For a small drop he saw my finger blood,
Then think y^e not that I should do some deid
For him again, and take some small penhance,
That might me cause of him have remembrance:
Therefore I shall him love in such a wise,
That I must love the grave wherein he lyes,
And so; his sake such penhance take on me,
That where he lyes abode it shall I be.
Then the shireffe took leaue, and up he rose,
The next gate unto the gallous goes:
And when he came, the thief that he left there
Was stoln away, whereof he made great care,
And said oft times, What have I done a late?
Here is become to me a carefull case:
My goods, my gear, and also all my land,
My life like wile is in the king his hand:
So he wandring in furt both to and fro,

And

The seven Sages.

And know not what to say for verie woo!
So at the last he thought that he would passe
To the Ladie before where that he was,
Because she was so debout in her sell,
He trowd of her to have some good counsell:
Then came he on about the first cock,
And at the doo quietly did he knock.
Quoth she, Who is that so thin calleth now?
I the Shireffe am come again to you:
I have a sturt and anger at mine heart,
And I would shew thereof to you some part:
Therefore heartily I pray you let me in,
I shall you shew the matter main and min:
Howbeit it was to her some prettill pain,
Yet up she rose and let him in again.
Then he began the case all soz to tell,
Quoth he, Ladie, I come to have counsell
Of you, because I note right well ye know,
When any man is hanged by the law,
Mine office is to keep him night and day,
To that effect he be not stoln away:
And if he be, my life and all my lands
Without remead is in the kings own hands.
It is so chanc'd, while I was here right now,
In the same time while I talked with you,
The thief which I should have waked while day
Some subtil hands have stolen him away,
Wherethrough I will incurre the king his sad,
Lose all my lands, and also fine my head:
Or else on force out of this realm to go,

which

The seven Sages.

Which is but doubt an heable case to mee,
Beseeching you your counsell giue me to
Into this case what yee think best to do.
Quoth he, Good sir, for you mine heart is too,
That such mischance should happen on you so:
But since yee have made your first mone to mee,
I must you help, defend, and als supplie:
So should kindnesse, courtesie and reason
Of a two heart to have compassion.
Quoth he, Ladie, I lippen on you no lesse,
But for to have your counsell and kindnesse,
Because yee are in great estimation,
In wit, wisdome, and als deuotion:
And I beleue to have your counsell now,
For all my cause clean I commit to you:
For it is said since first the world began,
There is great help into a good woman.
This Ladie then was moved with mercie,
And on this night her heart had great pittie:
And she said, Sir, your sturt it moeue me,
But take good heart, and yee shall helped be,
Do my counsell, and shortly to conclude,
Ye shall neither losse your life, lands, nor good.
He said, Ladie, that erand brought me here,
To save my life, my lands, my goods, and gear.
Quoth she, Good sir, will yee say faithfollly,
When I have done that yee will marrie me:
I will do all that I have to you said.
Quoth he, Ladie, of that I would be glad:
Would God in heaven to me yee would do so,

That

The seven Sages.

That I might be your person fellow to,
 Considering I am but a poor knight,
 And yet a Ladie of great blood and might,
 Would ye disdain to humble your self to me,
 I should you serue with all humilitie:
 So both their mindes and all their whole intent
 Was well agreed, whereof they were content.
 Good Sir, said she, ye know right well I wote,
 How mine husband was buried of the late,
 Who loved me so wonder well indeed,
 That for a drop he saw my finger blood:
 He took in heart so great sturt and pleasure,
 Of doulfull death suffered the sharp shoure,
 To take him up for to be your relief,
 And hing him up where hanged was the thief.
 The Shireffe said, fair Ladie, by the rood
 Your counsell is substantiall and good:
 When past they both boldly with main and might,
 Out of the grave they took this new deade knight.
 The Shireffe said, yet one thing feareth me,
 The thief which I caused hing upon the tree,
 Two of his teeth aboue was stricken out,
 Therefore I stand into a dreadfull doubt:
 If any man the samins should perceiue
 That this dead corse his teeth aboue doth haue:
 It were my death, and called great deceat,
 What for to do hereof not well I wait.
 She said, your self might that right well remead,
 I gibe you lieke strike thre out of his head.
 Quoth he, Ladie, to that I were right loth,

The seven Sages.

For of a knight it is against the oath,
Either golden or dead men for to strike,
It would greatly both faith and fame infect:
And also when he was living here on life,
Except my childe, and my wedded wife
I lov'd him best of any man-land,
Wherefore in him I cannot put my hand.
If ye will not ding them out then, said she,
Faith for your love the same thing I will do:
So with a stone two of his teeth out bang,
When had the shireff hing him where the thief hang:
The shireffe said, yet I fear one great thing,
The thief which I on the gallows can hang
An hideous wound he got on the forehead,
At his taking they had him at such feat,
And both his legs they shew'd quite bare,
And your husband be he not even right la,
It should be my destruction hallowe,
In this matter I pray you counsell me:
Amongst the rest, quoth she, that's but shoure,
Can not your self peartly draw out your sword
On the forehead strike him as best offere,
When that is done, then cut off both his ears:
Quoth he, lady, from that God me defend,
Considering unto his liues end
I lov'd him well, and had in company,
In that behalf I pray you pardon mee:
And as before I did to you declare,
Of clean knight-head the oath it is contrarie:
Give me your sword, quoth she, and for your love,

What

The seven Sages.

That came to do now peartly shall I probe;
 She took the sword, and to the man was dead
 A cruel stroke she gave him in the head:
 With the same sword into her great despite
 Of both his lugs she made him quite:
 Then said, Good Sir, now ye may without tarie
 But any fear him to the gallous carie;
 And hing him up where the thief hang before,
 So are ye quite of danger, hurt, and more.
 The thireffe said, yet one thing rests in thought,
 Therefore while now remembrance had I nought
 Howbeit the thief was whole in bowk and bones,
 Yet well I wote he wanted both the bones:
 And be that known all is for nought that's done.
 Quoth she, In faith the bones he shall want soon:
 And with a knife the bones he took him fra,
 And said, Good Sir, now to the trees hie ye,
 He cumberes us for to bide so long here.
 Quoth he, My self alone now not hie bear.
 Quoth she, In faith for that it shall not stop,
 Take ye the tail and I shall take the top:
 For since he came out from the sepulture
 I have him nide as a loathsome creature
 To these gallous these two took him but more,
 And hanged him where the thief hang before.
 Then was the thireffe of the kings danger quite,
 By the great help of the lady so white.
 Then said she, Sir, now verie well ye know,
 How that ye were by order of the lady
 Backe life and lands in danger for to tye,
 And

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The seven Sages.

And now I haue brought all to a good fine,
By my counsell, and only for your love,
For your pleasure, and also for your behope:
Wherefore since ye in all matters haue sped,
Now I desire again ye would mee wed,
Conforme to your condition and promise,
Which in no sort I know ye will not misse.
He said, Forsooth Ladie I made a vow
That I should not marrie woman but you,
So long as ye were liuing upon life,
But wo to him that hath thee to his wife:
Thou shamelesse shrew, and most wicked of all,
Spittfull tiger, a vengeance thee befall:
A noble knight thou hadst to thine husband,
And for a drop of blood sworth of thine hands:
He had such love: yet, inward love to thee,
For hurt thereof at short cause he to die:
Thou in no wise all his love regarding,
His for most teeth cruelly thou didst out ding,
In his forehead a fell wound didst thou strike,
Cuttest his legs, and also his stones such like:
When I think on this ugly villanie,
God me preserve that I not marrie thee:
And for that cause I finde thee so cruell
To him alone that loved thee so well:
In time coming thou canst no better be
To any man, that would lay love on thee:
Wherefore I think that thou shalt shame no man,
In time coming mine own hands shall thee slay:
And so at short he put her there to dead,

¶

The seven Sages.

Hee drew his sword, and quite cut off her head.
The Master said unto the Emperour,
Sir, I require if it be your pleasure,
If that ye have the words of this tale tane?
The Emperour said, yea Master every one:
She was a wise the worst and most cruell
That I befoze of any yet heard tell:
The Shireffe als rewarded her the thing
That she deserb'd to her daides according:
Ye good Master, heartly I you besek,
That I may once my son blithly hear speak,
For that would make such blithnesse to mine heart,
From that time forth I care not to depart.
He said, My Lord, and please your Majestie,
That thing the morow ye shall both hear and see
At your pleasure as your self doth desire,
In audience befoze the whole empire:
And shall know well the cause of unkindnesse
Betwixt us seven, your son, and the Emperesse.
The Emperour said, If that thing come to passe,
Then your reward shall be what ye will as.
He said, My Lord, all is at your pleasure,
So took his leabe then from the Emperour.

MORALITAS.

Into this tale that the Doctour hath told
We may perceiue sentences manifold,
Pertaining to womens unstablenesse,

That

The seven Sages.

That causd her big above the grave an hold,
First their own will to have ay that they would,
For to make known her fained holinesse,
Which soon was turnd to babish brulknesse,
Consider then how that she was so bold
In diverse sorts, and shew her cruelnesse.

First shee her shew to bee in estimation
A chaste widow, and live in devotion,
In godly prayer, and in almes deede,
Which soon was turnd in dissimulation,
Of her own spouse that made such mutilation,
Who died because she saw her finger bleed,
What gave she him for his good word and meed,
His stones and lugs she stowed, and teeth out dang,
Then on the gallous as a chiet did him hang.

. Here is her love, here is her stablesse,
Here is her favour, here is her faithfulnessse,
Here is her chastnesse, here her charitie,
Her courtesie, here is all her kindnessse,
Her womanhead, lo here is here meeknesse,
Here is her hope, here is her honestie,
Here is her gansell, here all her goodnesse,
Now all is changd into keen crueltie.

O marvellous God, what may this matter mean,
What women are so cruell and so keen,
And ever given to wickednesse and vice,
In former time evermore so hath been,
And in no sort can yet therefra abstain,
But persuevers, there is a matter nice,
I think it best to play them at the dice.
The nearest way is this world as I ween,
To save their shame set them on sink and see.

where

The seven Sages.

Where should be faith there shew they fainednesse,
And where favour they shew unfaithfulnesse;
Where should bee rest they rarle ay in a rane
Where love should be there shew they bitternesse:
Where peace should be there shew they up boldnesse,
Where goodnesse is there lodging have they nane,
Where teen and tray that houe is to them rane:
Where meekenesse is, then are they ay menlesse,
O married men, for you I make great mane.

For why? your heads are still bound to a stake,
And though yee do all yee can for her sake,
As you becomes both into word and deed,
And so dayly on her service do vaike,
She counts not all your cunning worth a caike,
When ever she craibes, or casts backward the creed,
Even as the knight saw his wifes finger bleed,
In loyes labour when ever that yee inlake,
All things bygone she counts not worth a threed.

Because they are so kittle of the kame,
Whiles like wilde wolves, whiles as a dove as tame,
In at your bosome, and then out at your lieve,
Such soulesse things have neither sin nor shame,
Then we do wrong any wise them to blame,
They will do nought that will their husbands grieve,
Nor scarcely speak unlesse he give her lieve,
Such innocents that know of nought but ill
They covet nought but ay to have their will.

Some makes so moy, so gimpe, so dink and dane,
Howbeit yee speak she will not blink again:
And if she do, it is out on the side,
Thar Fillocks would bee at the field as fane,
That seemes a Sainct, now fend us from Sathan:
Though she be brawld, and busked like a bride,
Under colour she is a gracclesse guide,

The seven Sages.

A fool fulfild of phantasie prophane,
A ranck rebald readie all times to ride.

Ye good women example here may see,
Be not fained with false hypocrisie:
In mens sight presenting an Angel,
And then inward satiat with crueltie,
Fulfilled with all fraud and falsitie:
All this it comes of the great devil of hell,
Who dayly sets his courag^e for to quell
All mankinde with his keen crudelitic,
So women do as now no more I tell.

A praise to the seventh Master.

THou hast Doctor put off a doubtfull day,
The seventh & last wherein most perrill lay
And say'de the child upon the morne at noon
Now in Gods name let him come on a way,
To the Empresse if he hath ought to say:
To say it out I think it were well done,
For she hath been to him right importoon
In his contrarie she hath done that she may
To cause him misse both dinner and disoon.

An exclamation to the child.

Now since thou speakes on her thou wreak the well,
If thou hast cause thy self thou hast some feel,
Thank her no more than thou had banged been,
If thou hast hap, now hit her on the heel:
And spare her not though she were stiffe as steel,
For she hath been to thee right wonder keen:

T

which

The seven Sages.

*Which in no sort pertained to a Queen,
On such a wise a young clark to cause kill:
Who never wrought to her tray nor teen.*

How *Dioclesiane* on the Empresse complaind,
And him excusde of all matter she meande.

After that the seven Masters all about,
Had sab'd this child of all danger and doubt,
By good reasons of stories heard and sen,
Upon the moorn together did conban:
To a counsell to see how well they might,
Conboy this child unto his fathers sight;
And from prison how best they should him bzing,
All to consult they pass for the same thing:
So to prison they came with one consent,
To speak this child before the none they went,
His opinion and counsell for to hear;
What he wanted that they seven should him lear,
Right well besen in honest ornament,
Of his Masters twosome before him went:
And on each side of his Masters went one,
And three behind and so foreward are gone;
And fourteen men in their company went,
Each one playing on diuerse instrument:
And every one was Masters in Musicke,
For melodie and mirth there was none sicke;
To the Palace this child they did conboy,
With great blithnesse, mirth melodie and joy,
So that the sound of all the instruments,
And the great noise in at the windows went.

What hat

The seven Sages.

What was the noyse the Emperour did demand,
They said it was his Son comming at hand:
Unto your grace soz to excuse him sell,
Of part of plaints which some did to you tell.
The Emperour said these thyngs would like me,
My Son speaking if I might hear o2 see,
In the palace this young child took entresse,
Whereof many made mirth and merrinelle;
And when he came to his fathers presence,
He hailed him with duly reverence:
With honour, favour, and humilitie
As him became o2 could of courtesie.
The company and all about was glad,
With great gladnesse to his father he said:
Haille father dear, health honour, and welfare
Be to your grace soz now and evermore;
So soon as he of his Son heard the voice,
Into his heart it did him so rejoyce:
That his great love his wits it did confound,
That he soz joy flatlings fell to the ground.
Then up again his Son took him in bair,
And diverse times in his armes he him bairt:
So with sweet words and comfortable bracing,
From swoon again he did his father bring:
As soon from swoon as the Emperour did wake,
The child began to his father to talk;
Yet of people there was such confluence,
The child to speak could scarce get audience:
The Emperour cande casten soz to be
Great summes of gold outthorough the whole citie;

The seven Sages.

To that effect to draw the people away,
That he might hear what thing his son would say,
Of the money yet few took small regarde:
That the young man so fane they would have heard,
The Emperour cryed, give audience,
On paine of death each man to keep silence.
When all was close to speak there durst no man,
Then so to speak Dioclesiane began.

¶ My father dear humblye I you besek,
That ye will cause ere I mo words do speak:
Your own Emperesse with her fair ladies gent,
At my sermon eachone to be present:
The Emperour incontinent gave command,
That the Emperesse should thither come fra hand,
With her ladies of her chamber eachone:
To her in haste the messenger is gone,
In right great haste the messenger shew her till,
The Emperour his whole command and will.
She hearing that strake in a fellon fear,
Was no remed but all they must compare
Then did the child desyre the Emperour,
That all the ladies of the Emperesse house
Should stand in row eachone at others side,
On paine of death that none should themselves hide
That the people might all them plainly see,
Their trim makidome and als their honestie,
Their fayour face their fame and fashion.
Their brabe havings and their painted person,
Upon the dase their saints when they were dyen,
They were most like angels come out of heaben.

They

The seven Sages.

They were so swart some said they were all sants,
Trus men them calde as trim as tergimants.
Then stood they up all into plaine ptesence,
Unto the child gaue open audience.
Then said the child, father, lift up your éne,
Behold how long that ye haue blinded been:
With your Empresse that is your married Quén
And that young wench that is all clad in green,
Which is your maid unto your own Empresse,
Whom she hath more in favour and kindnesse:
Than ever she had I dare well take on me
Since they first met unto your Majestie,
Whom I desire if that it please your grace,
To be uncled before you in this place:
That being done right well ye shall perceiue,
Such a bount maid and such Empresse ye haue.
To whom answered this noble Emperour,
Thou knowest (son) it is not mine honour:
It will be shame to me and to us all,
A naked maid before us for to call.
Then said the child a maiden if she be,
All the great shame thereof be laid on me:
If she be not a young maid, as ye tell.
Then let all shame remain still with her sell.
The Emperour commanded that be done,
The officers they unbeclad her soon:
Her clothes off tane it well appeared than,
It was no maid but alwayes was a man:
And by all signes of members naturall.
Whereof many had wonder great marvell.

The seven Sages.

Then said the Son with all humillite,
The very truth father now may ye see:
Of the falsset and great subtilenesse
Of this rebald, and als of your Emperesse:
How day and night in blinonesse they you led,
When they best thought have ay despyde your bed,
In your chamber ay wold such barlotrie:
Fornication, whoz dome, adulterie
Not regarding Gods law noz conscience
Noz your dreaddont, your love, noz reverence;
But evermore their lust and their pleasure,
Look when they lik to your great dishonour.
When the Emperour saw all the verity,
How this young man was clad as a Lady:
And used nightly in chamber with the Quen
For very wrath impatience and fen,
His æne they glowd and als his face it swellit,
His great anger there's no man that can tell it:
He commanded them both incontinent,
Without mercy to be condemnde and burnt.
Then said the Son, father remain a time,
While I reprove her of her cruell crtime:
She laid on me and falsly on me brought
The thing which I had ne'r in minde noz thought,
The father said that thing and all the rest:
As in your hand do with't as ye think best.
Then said the Son a lyer if she be,
Then let the law correct her for her lie:
But ye shall know when first ye for me sent,
My self I past and spyde the firmament:

where

The seven Sages.

Wherein I saw a word if that I spake,
Within seven dayes that I with shame and lake
Should thole the dead with all great crueltie:
By any way that could debyled be.
And that alone by the great soze-thought sead,
Of the Emperesse imagining mine dead:
That was the cause, father I durst not speak,
Therefore pardon at you now here I seek:
And where she sayes that I would her opprest
In truth that is a lasing manifeſt:
But truly she did all that in her was,
In ebery sozt to bying that thing to passe.
And when she saw that I refuſde such thing,
And answered not, incontinent she did bying:
Paper and pen with ink she had readie,
Prayde me to wryte my minde there quietly:
And when I wrote and all her minde refused,
And prayed her soz to hold me excused:
For I would not defile my fathers bed,
Then the wryting under her ſet she tread:
Then rabe her face and all her robes she rent,
And with loud voice she cryde incontinent:
And yet that crime she laud alone on me,
Father in truth this is the veritie.
When the Emperour this tale heard to him told,
When the Quæns face greatly he did behold:
With awsome vult angrie and als auster,
And not but cause saying on this manner:
O most filthie and shamelesse creature!
Nicht thou no wise ſtanchd thy soule nature:

with

The seven Sages.

With my body and with thy rebald knabe;
 But in like sort mine own son thou wouldest have,
 A wicked wife neuer taking regard
 Of thine own shame, nor of heavenly reward,
 Had thou tane heed of whom thou had descended:
 That would neuer so far to me offended,
 Thou wrought alwayes that eber thou could inuent
 On the gallous to cause my Son be spent.
 And ay thy minde with falsset was infected:
 Trusting all time such should not be corrected,
 But God is just howbeit he thole a time,
 As he thinks good he will punish the crime:
 Therefore because of such thou hadst no shame,
 Upon thy self shall ly both wite and blame,
 That me so long thy bedfellow hast blinded:
 Therefore thy flesh for such faults now shall find it
 Then gruslings (with the fell upon her face,
 Down at his knee and at him cride for grace:
 Saying good Lord for thy princely pitie
 To me most vile thou would grant some mercie:
 For my great guilt here plainly I confesse,
 Grant me some grace for thy great gentlenesse
 Then to her said this noble Emperour
 Who was fulfild with furt and displeasure,
 A vile woman for mercy thou dost crade,
 Which by no way thou art worthy to have:
 The cruell death thou hast deserbed thise,
 Which I shall show by thre manner of wayes;
 First thou hast done the sin of adulterie,
 To the great shame and contempion of me:

Which

The seven Sages.

Which by the law expresse is no remead,
A Princes bed for to defile but dead,
Then secondly mine only son and air:
Thou didst provoke to be adulterar.
For that effect to the chamber him led,
With thee to ly and to defile my bed
Which serveth death as no man can excuse,
Howbeit the same in truth he did refuse.
Lastly each day with false tales tyssed me,
Contrare justice to cause mine own Son die,
Because thou knew his cleargie and cunning,
Thy foul bandie and filthinesse would out bring
Wherefore by law thou servest punished to be,
Pea of all law to have extremitie.
Then said the Son Father right well ye know,
How the dayly tyssed you (not by law)
But with her tales and fained false leasing,
Upon gallous but merrey me to bring.
Where not through help of my good masters seven,
And first supply of the great God of heaven,
Which will ever the innocent defend,
And into need will to them succour send,
Which presently he hath to me now done
Into my need hath send me succour soon.
Also father I trust it was you told,
By your Emperesse that I purposde and wold:
Deprive your grace from this noble Emperre,
Which never was yet truly my desyre:
And also he said that it was mine intent,
You to destroy with my Masters consent.

And

The seven Sages.

And by that way your riches so to obtain,
Which truly yet my minde did never mean:
Such so to do I pray God me defend,
Dy yet think such once unto my liues end:
For of your grace my liuing all I haue
But ye on life I ought no more to craue,
I am your son and ye my father dear:
Would I you want for any worldly gear,
Pay, nay, not so, for I shall ay labour
For to uphold your welfare and honour,
At my power and utter diligence:
With heart and hand and all good reverence,
At your pleasure your bidding and command,
Lassing your life ay constant shall I stand:
But your Emperesse she wrought both night and day
In all kin sort to work betwene us tway,
As his father kest his son into the sea:
Because his son told him for veritie,
That he should be aboue his father Lord,
To the which tale the father could not cord:
Then the father kest the son in the sea,
But the great God gave him help and supplie,
And would not thole that tyme he should be dead,
But through his grace he send him some remead:
Yet the sons tale it came truly to passe,
And the father not one mite worse he was:
To the father what hinderance could it be,
Howbeit his son had obtaynde dignitie,
Not hindering the father in no sort
I think it should haue ben to his comfort;

And

The seven Sages.

And Godwilling father my governance,
Ye shall perceive shall be no hinderance:
Nor prejudice in no sort to your grace,
But alwayes shall be mirth, joy, and solace.
Then said on high this noble Emperour,
To God alone be loving and honour:
That such a Son undeserbed hath me send,
To guide this realme after my dayes end:
So wise, so good, so vertuous in all thing
To great welfare so able this realme bring,
Now my dear Son heartly I thee require,
Tell me some tale that all about may hear:
Wherethrough they may thy wisdom understand
Noth be father that shall I take on hand:
So ye command all men to keep silence,
While I have done and give me audience:
When I have done as ye think expedient,
On your Emperesse then ye give forth judgement.
When silence was commanded to all man,
Dioclesiane thus wise his tale began.

After Titan had tane his staffe in hand,
And lightly lap as Lord out o' the land:
Because the day was both sweet, soft, and fair,
Then up he rose and past to my Librar:
And stodyed there a while as I thought good,
Because it was my use and consuetude:
And so after my lesson was compleat,
Then to refresh and recreate my spirit:
As for that time I layd aside my book,

And

The seven Sages.

And in mine hand a little volume took,
Of righter dyte and stozies of the old,
That our elders befoze time have us told:
In which volume diuerse stozies ou'r kelt,
That pleasant was but yet amongst the rest:
A fine fable in that volume I fand
Which at this time to our purpose may stand,
This was the matrch of the matter indeed
As ye shall hear this tale so I proceed.

BEfoze this time there was an noble Knight,
Manly in minde and aboundant in might:
A gay Lady he had unto his wife,
And betwixt them he led a godly life.
Only one Son he had, no bairnes mo:
Whom of they took great blithnes, mirth, and so,
And him delivered in far and strange countrie,
Him to instruct and soz to learn cleargie.
Of cunning men that Cleargie had perquaire,
As ye have done to me this many yere.
So this young man as he in person grew,
So dailly did he in cunning and bertew.
Then after that he was seven yær at lair,
Considering he was his fathers aire
And had no man to byok his heritage,
At seven yærs end he send soz him message:
Charging him son soz to come home fra hand,
Which he obey'd his fathers whole command:
And when he came to his fathers presence,
He hailled him with all good reverence:

The seven Sages.

As him effard with great humillite,
His mother als in semblable degré,
Whereof he had both game, glæ, and blythnesse,
That theire own Son was commed to such grace:
For not alone in vertue he increst,
But als of body he was the likeliest.
Manly and stout well made at all fashion,
Well labourde of face and good proportion,
Gentle, humane, courteous, noble free,
All men him lobed for his humanitie.
So on a time it chanced upon a day,
His father and mother at table sat these thway,
The Son seruing them both right courteously,
From the kitching the courses brought comely.
In the meane time on a tree lighted down,
At the window and sang with heauenly soun
A nightingal which sang with notes so clear,
So wonder swæt they all her notes did hear.
Eight dayes in one they would neber thought long,
To hear the bird so done swæt was her song,
Then said the Knight well were he all his dayes,
That understood what yon bird sings or sayes.
Then said the Son father with your honour,
So that it be to you no displeasure:
The birds song I shall declare to you,
But I am feard that ye take sturt therethow,
The ffather said Son for my bennison
What that bird sayes make interpretation,
Say on boldly for no person take fear,
For I thereat shall no wise change my chear:

Then

The seven Sages.

When said the Son this is the very tale,
That ye father heares of the nightingale:
That I shall be such a man of great might,
And honourde be with Lord, baroun and knight,
And shall come to that ye my father free
The water plate that ye shall hold to me,
And my mother befoze me she shall stand:
Beside her self with towell in her hand.
Waiting while I wash mine hands in the plate,
This is the song that the bird sang of late.
The father said thou false milkerd knave
Thou shalt of us never such service have,
For never shall come to such dignitie,
That we two shall make such service to thee:
So in malice and also in great woodnesse,
In great furie and unnaturall kindnesse:
He led his Son and kest him in the sea,
In displeasure, enby, and cruelte:
Saying after in the sea he him flang
Lye thou there still gesser of the birds sang:
The child could swim and so chanced to land
Both whole and sound helped by Gods right hand,
And fasted there even as the storie sayes,
But meet or drink by the space of fourte dayes.
On the fift day by chance a ship came by,
Whereon sharply right loud the child can cry:
Skipper of ship for love and chertie,
From this perill I pray you to save me.
The skipper heard and belyve drew to land,
And saw the child in what state he could stand.

The seven Sages.

On him they had ruth and compassion,
Seeing he was a likely good person:
So narrowly by chance death hee schewed,
All in one holce their hearts upon him rewed;
And in on bozds with speed did him receave
And in far lands to their countrie did have:
Then to a Duke of that countrie him sold,
For a great summe of money to them told:
And as this boy grew dayly into age,
In like manner he grew in personage,
Wise and humane in manners comfortable,
Gentle, iocund, and to all game right able:
So with all men he came in such favour,
The Duke him lov'd and took at him pleasure,
Into so far he had the whole credence,
Of all his house and the preheminnence;
In that same time the King of that countrie,
All his great Lords and counsell called he.
His great Barons his knights and noble men,
That of his minde in some part they may ken.
Amongst the rest even did this Duke also,
To the counsell prepare himself to go;
And with him took this child in company
For his wisdom and his great courtesie:
So these Lords hastned them with reverence,
Before the King gave due obedience;
They being all together so conveno,
To them in plaine he did shew what he meand:
Saying, my good Lords and true barons all,
You to my counsell for this cause did I call.

The

The seven Sages.

The matter is so great I haue to tell,
Therefore I would ye kept all counsell:
If any man the truth will me declare,
I him promise my daughter and mine aitre,
Into spousage after me to be King,
When I am dead for ay to brook my reigne
This is the truth and matter moeth me,
About this place resorts still Ravens thre,
And follows ay where euer I go or ly,
Rouping in one and dayly on me cry
Whiles me behind and whiles they come befoze,
With suchlike lookes as they would me deuoure:
They leaue me not but ay continually,
They rounp they roar and euer shouts on me,
Scraiping on eird and wabing with their wings
Dabbing their nebs and at the window dings:
Therefore I send if any of you did know
The cause hereof that ye would to me show,
His good reward he shall not need to crabe,
As I haue said the same thing he shall haue:
So he deuoid the Ravens from me all cleen,
And in my sight no moze that they be seen.
When this was moed to all the counsell there,
There was no man the question could declare.
Then said this child to his father the Duke,
The man on hand that pon same question took.
For to declare would he get his promise
From the Kings grace: ye quote the Duke I wish
Then said the childe if it pleased your grace,
To shew the King I shall declare the case:

Under

The leuen Sages.

Under the pain to put mine head in pledge
As he hath said for to fulfill the wage.
When the Duke heard this tale he was right glad,
Incontinent past to the quæn, and said,
And please your grace there is a young man here,
A cunning clerk, in clotgie right perquits,
Wise and wittie, and of ingine right hie,
Which promisseth that he shall satisfie
All your desires, and the samine fulfill
Touching the ravens, if so it be your will
For to compleat the thing that ye have said,
Faith, quoth the king, thereof I would be glad.
Then brought the Duke the childe into presence
Before the king with all good reberence,
Then said the king, Young man can ye declare
The question that I proponed aye
Before my Loyds, touching the ravens thre?
Then said the childe, that shall I do plainly,
So that your grace your promise will fulfill.
Then said the king, but doubt truely I will,
Who ever will this question mee declare
He shall marrie my daughter and mine heire.
Then said the childe, This is the cause, and why
That thir thre ravens dayly on you cry,
There was two ravens a female and a male
That had clecked the thir withoutten faille,
Where they clecked into that earch countrie
Was great hunger, verth, and penuritie:
For fault of food women and men decreast,
In like manner so did both fowle and beast,

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Then

The seven Sages.

Then this young raven being intill her nest
The mother flew oʒr fields where she thought best,
Seeking her food in land out over all where,
And of her bird she took no sturt no2 care.
Then the male raven seeing that displeasure,
Upon her self she took dayly labour,
With pain and pine, and great penuritie
For this young raven, while it had strength to flee,
And send her self out over the fields so fair,
So of mother it took no sturt no2 care,
Now is past by the skant time of the year,
Meat grew at large, and viuals was not dear,
Men, beast, and fowle had meat abundantly
The female raven came home then hastily,
And would have had such freindship and kindnesse
To the young raven, as he which in distresse
Fed him with food while he could finde him sell,
The female raven thereof took no trauell:
Then the male raven took well into his thought,
How he his bird had nursest and upbrought
In time of death, penuritie, and skant,
He thought no way his bird that he would want:
For the female out over the fields flew,
And left her bird but help o2 yet reskew
Still in the nest, which therefore could not flee,
But there on force for toly still and die:
Therefore the male though he had moze kindnesse
To the young raven, that in need and distresse
Out of perill it nourished and upbrought,
No2 the female, that flew and fed it nought:

Therefore

The seven Sages.

Therefore the male sayes that he should possesse
his own young bird that helped it in need,
rather then she which in necessitie
left it alone, but help in point to die.
Then the female alledged this again,
that in the birth of her bird had moze pain,
moze labour, sozrow, and penuritie,
moze hunger then the male had by such thze:
Therefore of him she ought to have moze mirth.
That had of him such sozrow in her birth,
for this each cause my sobetaigne Word the king
thir rabens cryes, and for none other thing,
Desiring you to judge by your wisdome
who this young bird shall bynke in time to come,
Therefore will ge on this thing gibe sentence,
They will no moze come in your grace presence.
Then said the king, because that the female
left her own bird into such need and bale,
and in no sort would nourish it nor feed,
but from it fled when that it had most need:
I think alwayes with reason it should stand
the bird should be at bidding and command
with the male raven, and his companie;
because he fed it in necessitie:
And where that she alleadgeth her again,
to have moze start, sozrow, travail, and pain
in his clekning, sozth-bynging, and his birth,
I say to you, all that was turned in mirth.
As soon as she her own bird quick could see,
she quite sozgot her great overtille,

The seven Sages.

And als the male is cause of procreation,
And instrument of all generation;
I say also in time of her great need
He did his bird with pain nourish and feed:
When the female it left into the nest,
With great hunger, and als with cold opprest,
Wherefoze I giue definitive sentence,
That the male rabin shall ay haue still presence,
The fellowship and als the companie.
Of the young bird, where euer he go or flee;
And the female his fellowship shall want it,
Except the male unto the female grant it.
When the ravens heard the king so declare,
Incontinent they flew up in the air,
With such a noise as it had thunderben,
And was no more in that region seen.
This being done, in short time after them
Incontinent the king took this young man;
And said, Good friend, your name to me, ye shall
Alexander, quoth he, they do me call.
Then said the king, ye shall take none but me
For your father, and ye my son shall be.
For ye shall haue my daughter in spouseage,
And after me shall haue her heritage,
And ever still shall be he Lord and King,
And this realme shall haue in governing.
Then Alexander in his hole still he hid,
Dayly service unto the king he did,
All men him loved for his great courtesie,
His gentlenesse, and his humanitie:

The seven Sages.

Hee was so soft, so humble, and main sweet,
Courteſſe, cunning, debonaire, and diſcreet,
In all good games himſelf he did frequent,
In hoſſe, harnelle, juggling, and ſportment;
And all good games gaind for an gentleman
Dayly he uſed, and ay the praiſe he wan
Aboue all them that dwelt into Egypt,
He far excels, and had the maſterſhip
In all that realm, neither by far nor near,
In manly acts there was none found his peer;
For yet was there no great obſcure queſtion
But he thereto would giue ſolution:
So he guided in all thing, and well probed,
With old and young wonder well was beloved.

In this mean time Titus the Emperour,
Which was a man of might and great honour;
Of gentleneſſe, and alſo courteſſe,
In all vertue hee was an A-per-se:
Over the world ſo far rang his renown,
That he preceid all other that bare crown,
In ſo far that over all where did ſee
His noble name of liberalitie;
And round about into all parts him by,
Both far and neer openly gart he cry,
If any man in manners and wiſdome,
And good ingine into his courts would come,
Should be intreated to their own degree,
And rewarded after their facultie.
When Alexander heard tell of ſuch thing,
He paſt ſea hand to his father the king,

The sevenSages.

And said to him, kneeling upon his kneé,
 And please your grace my noble father fræ,
 The noble court and courtesie is known
 Of the Emperour, and to your grace is shewn,
 That every man delites there to abide
 That hath knowledge either to gang or ride,
 Learning shall learn manners and manlinesse,
 Practick of war good guiding and prouesse,
 Dew intreating with honour, land and gloze,
 And great reward he shall obtain thereso:
 If please your grace, I would desire heartly
 Into that court and companie to be,
 That I may wit and vertue dayly leir,
 By selfererce in noble acts of weir,
 This of your grace right humbly I desire,
 No wayes meaning that of your grace I tire,
 For Godwilling I shall return again
 To my pleasure which is my Soveraigne.
 Then said the king, Your talking pleaseyth me,
 But laith were I to want your companie:
 Yet not the lesse cause ye such thing desire,
 I would gladly grant it that ye require:
 But ere ye passe, see that ye furneisht be
 In all behaltes, gold, clothes, ho'se, and money,
 That ye want nought that is needfull to have,
 That ye therethow may both our honours save:
 Suchlike I think it were expedient,
 That ye should sponse my daughter ere ye went,
 Or ye return perchance a bairn forth bring,
 Then toist this realm either of quæn or king.

Alexan.

The seven Sages.

Alexander then said unto the king,
If please your grace to spare me of that thing
While I return, then shall I with honour
Your daughter spouse with your graces pleasure.
Then said the king, of that I am content,
Even as ye will I do thereto consent,
And grant you here with all benevolence
To passe your time where that ye please licence.
Then Alexander at the king took good night,
And all the Lords, both barons, squires and knights:
And last of all he past to the Ladies,
Took his good night, and gave him kisses three,
Wade her be blith, for long he thought not vide,
She said, Good sir, I pray God be your guide:
So forth he faired, a likely man to look,
And lap on horse, and on his voyage took:
And with him went an honest companie,
With gold, silver, furnet with all plentie
Unto the court where that the Emperour was
He takes journey, and so forward can passe:
And when he came unto the Emperour,
Upon his knees he hailso him with honour,
Great reverence and als humilitie,
But so soon as the Emperour could him see,
Where that he sat out of his seat he rose,
To Alexander but more tart he goes,
And killed him, as was of court the guise,
And in his armes he him embraced thusse,
And him inquiroe what was his name fra hand,
Wherefore he came, which way his native land:
Duch,

The seven Sages.

Suchlike he speieth whereof that he was come,
 Tell on he said the truth of all and some
 He said, and please your noble Majestie
 Alexander men useth to call me,
 The king of Egypts son and heire I am,
 I wot his grace will ratifie the same,
 And is come here unto your Majestie
 To do service, if ye will except me.
 Ye are welcome the Emperour said then,
 Ye seems to be a noble gentleman:
 To his steward then a command he gabe,
 That in household Alexander he should receave.
 The steward then to a chamber him led,
 And shew him then where he should have his bed,
 Well furnished into all necessaries,
 With pertinents thereto in all affaires,
 Alexander behav'd himself wisely
 With all the court, and each mans love wan he:
 So in short time for his well behaving
 Master carber he was made to the king.
 Not long after the king his son in France,
 To do service, and dayly observance
 In like manner come to the Emperour,
 Whom he receibed with blisshesse and honour:
 And speard suchlike at him what was his name,
 He said, Lodowick all men call mee at home,
 And am come here to do your grace service,
 If that you please pouchlate to mee office.
 The Emperour said, Alexander truly
 Is my carber, my copper ye shall be.

The seven Sages.

For that office I thinke ye be most able
To do service dayly before my table
So committed to the steward Lodowick,
To do to him as to Alexander suchlike.
So the steward to Lodowick did assigne
That same chalmere was Alexanders lodging,
Whereof they were both verie well appeased,
That they were two into one chamber eased.
Thir two yong men Alexander and Lodowick
In likin sort they were so wonder like,
In face, favour, in forme and fashion,
In stature, visage, speech, and condition,
That each man said, One was the others brother,
They scarcely could knowe the one by the other:
But Alexander in deedes was more active
Than was Lodowick, and far more scientive:
For Lodowick was shamefull and feminine,
And Alexander peart, surthie, and masculine;
Of more courage, more manly to behold
Than Lodowick was some said by the thirde fold.
The Emperour which Titus height to name
Had a daughter of fashion faire and same,
Height Florentine a gracions Lade,
Which nextest heir to her father should be,
Whom her father loved above measure,
To her he gave abundance of treasure,
Her owne servants she had with her to dwell,
And keepe court, and household by her sell,
To whom dayly the Emperour usde to send
Of his dartheis, his daughters meis to mend.

The Ieuen Sages.

In signe of love dayly a dish or tway,
And Alexander to her bare them away,
To this Ladie befoze her them presented,
So in her sight each day he was frequented,
Wherethrough labour of this Ladie he wan
For his wisdome aboue all other man.
Through businesse it chanced on a day,
At dinner time Alexander was away
From his serbice, and none in his absence,
His fault supplie, nor yet gave attendance.
Then Lodowick came, and that perceabed soon,
Did such serbice as Alexander shoulde done;
And serbed for him into the same stead,
His fault hee did supplie, and als remead:
At the dinner being neer hand at end,
The Emperour took up a dish, and send
To his daughter, as he was wont to do,
And bade Lodowick the same dish bear her to,
Believing well Alexander it had been,
Few could discern their disages between:
Then went Lodowick his way to the Ladie,
Presented her the dish upon his knee,
With reverence as he in heart best thought,
For he befoze that time had seen her nought:
Incontinent when he the meat her brought,
He perceabed Alexander it was nought.
Quoth she, Good sir, to me shew you your name,
He said, Lodowick it is surely I adame.
Whose son are yee? tell me but circumstance.
My father is, quoth he, the king of France.

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The seven Sages.

Quoth she, Good sir, I thank you of your paine,
Ye are welcome to passe, or yet remain,
Thank my father of the meat he hath send.
Quoth he, I shall, and so forth on he wend,
And took good leaue with all good reuerence,
So past again to the Emperours presence.
In this mean time Alexander came to table,
Did his service as he was wont and able.
The dinner done, Lodwick to chalmers past,
Right sick at heart, and laid him down bedfast.
Alexander perceibed incontinent,
Came to chalmers to Lodowick as he went:
And said to him, O my good companion,
What is the cause that ye are now lyen down?
Then said Lodowick, I feel my self truely
Wext at the heart with soze infirmities:
Greatly I fear unlesse I get remedie,
It holds me so that it shall be my deade.
Alexander said, the truth I traist to gesse,
The principall cause of all your soze sickness,
For this same day when that the meat ye bair,
To yon Ladie which that ye thought so fair:
Ye her beheld so verie fervently,
Her good manners, her visage and beaultie,
That ye therewith is hanked in her lobe,
From her your heart no way ye can remove.
Then said Lodowick, O my brother dear,
The verie truth but doubt ye have gone near,
All physicians in world they could not gesse,
Nor iudge more true the cause of my sickness,
Where

The seven Sages.

Whereof but doubt I take a fellow feir
 Get I no help that it shall do me dett.
 When Alexander bad him be of comfort,
 With my power I shall your pain support,
 Lift up your heart, and be of good courage,
 Start in no way your sicknesse can allwage.
 When Alexander bethought him of a cast,
 Incontinent to the market he past,
 A precious cloath with his own gold he bought,
 Whereof Lodowick knew no way, nor wist nought
 Waxe set about with precious stones coastly,
 And it presented to the faire Ladie.
 When she it saw, she asked him th by
 Where he should get such costly cloath to buy.
 Quoth he, the son of the most Christian King
 Hath for your love, Madame, send you this thing,
 But for a sight that he saw of your face,
 He is linked so far into loves lace,
 That he lyes sick without he get remead,
 Appearingly there is nothing but dead:
 And for your love suffer ye him to die,
 It shall degrade your honour greatly.
 Alexander she said, counsell ye me,
 That I should losse my clean virginittie,
 Considering I am of blood royall,
 Descended of the stock imperiall:
 And secondly as ye know well indeed
 By appearance to this crown should succeed:
 If I did so, as ye to me declare,
 Then were I tinct but doubt for evermore,

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The seven Sages.

Belêve yê well, that yê for such messago
shall have no thank, nor win of me no wage:
Therefore passe yê from hand out of my sight,
Your messagels neither reason nor right.
He saw the maide was something discontent,
Forth of her sight he past incontinent:
On the next day past Alexander again
To the mercat, and playde the counterpain.
To this Ladie he brought an fine head-gear,
Above the cloath it was three times as deare,
And it presented to the Ladie gent.
On Lodowicks name therewith unto her went.
When the Ladie this costly gift had seen,
She marveld what Alexander did mean,
And said to him, I marvell of a thing
That yê to me such costly gifts should bring
From any man, but if it were your self,
Deserrand ay your own errand to self.
And so oft times yê have had my presence,
And for to speak yê might have had licence:
Such thing but doubt in your head never lack,
Wherefore but doubt I can yon the lesse thank,
Noth he, Adamas, yê must hold me excused,
I durst not speak perchance yê had refused:
And more at ob't my birth it is fellow,
So high matters I durst not to yon shew.
Noth he, It is an proverb of the old,
Which I oft times in merrinelle heard told,
Let a young man whether he speid or nought
Wain not his spech, but speak forth, & spare nought:
Into

The seven Sages.

Into mine heart, quoth he, such was not groundes,
 For with such thing my heart was neuer wounded:
 And if such thing perchance had hapned me,
 I would haue charge one of more low degree
 For is your grace, but my friend Lodovick
 Is the great heir of the most chief kingdome
 Of all the world, and the most Christian king;
 The more bold he durst desire such thing
 Rather than I, which may be no compare
 Unto your grace, for your blood singular.
 Quoth he, this word in remembrance yet take,
 Love whom ye like, they say love hath no lack.
 Quoth hee, who hath into his companie
 A good fellow as Lodowick now hath me,
 And in him trusteth: Am I not bound again
 To wish him good where that he lyeth in pain,
 With my power in so far as I may.
 Doubtlesse, Madam, I could not say him nay:
 Therefore I think you had best traile and trew,
 Would ye vouchsafe on Lodowick to rewe,
 On him to haue compassion and pittie.
 What is so sore wounded in your beantie,
 A word of yours would make him whole again,
 Him to relieue of all sicknesse and pain:
 Let not his death be no wise on you laid,
 For that thing shall your honour great degraide:
 If ye absent from him your good kindnesse,
 Each man will say that ye are mercilesse.
 He said, Good sir, for such ye serue great crime,
 Of mee ye get no answer at this time,

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The seven Sages.

Therefore passe on your wages, farewell, adieu,
Yee are to blame so sharply to perswade
For any man, but if it were your sell,
Passe on your way, as now no more I tell,
He took his leave, and departed anone,
The mozn again to the mercat is gone,
And bought a belt, which ten times was more bett,
For was the cloth, and als the gay beaogert,
Presenting it unto the Ladies sight,
On Lodowicks name the wofull wounded wight.
When she perceabed the gifts costly was,
Into her self she kest and did compasse,
Such diuerse things as needes not to be shoun,
For to each man in no kinde to be known:
Therefore as now I think best let them bee,
Each man should not know Ladies priuities:
But at the last to Alexander she said,
I wot not well to be moved or glaid
At your message, but wonder loath were mee
In my default that any man should see,
A mans life to losse for lack of love,
If I so did I were great to reprob:
Therefore yee shall haue in this point credence,
In my chalmere I will giue him presence.
At the thirde houre that past is o'er midnight,
My chalmere doo he shall finde open right,
Behow yet him so, this is my minde and will,
Your minde, quoth he, Madams I shall fulfill:
Of the answer Alexander was glaid,
Past to the chalmere, and to his fellow said,

Lodo-

The seven Sages.

Lodowick ly not, ye lack not long for love,
 I have not hainde to hant for your behove:
 The companie of you fair & able gent,
 Howbeit sometime the ston not all content:
 Yet not the lesse some grace I have obtained,
 To your intent so far to her I meaned,
 Her great favour to you I have purchast,
 And I believe all is come for the best:
 Wherefore be blith, and take you good comfort,
 With clean courage now get you up at short:
 And in secret I will you shew a thing,
 To her chamber this night I shall you bring,
 Where that yee shall right wonder welcome bee,
 And well intreated with that gay Ladie.
 When he that heard, he was couragious,
 Both hail and feir, iocund, and als joyous:
 As blith in heart, and sturt away was wozn,
 As ever he was from first day he was bozn:
 Was never byde so blith of her bydegroom,
 Was never bird so blith to light on bloom:
 For yet sparhawk so blith to get her pray,
 For yet the lack in fresh mornings of May:
 Never menstrall so blith of his reward,
 As Lodowick was when he thir rithings heard,
 But for to speak of perfitte potingars,
 Fine physicians, marvellous medicinars,
 Clarkes of cunning, and counsellours of hale,
 Charmers of shafts, and givers of libeal:
 I never read into no book nor place,
 As Alexander to Lodwick in this case,

The seven Sages.

For look how soon that Lodowick heard him speake
He said himself he was no longer sick.
He know leeches will have a long proceste;
Good entreating rewards and also kindnesse,
Bankets making where ever it may be sought:
With Alexander by no way to be wrought,
Alexander debursed his money ay,
Not being known to Lodowick in no way,
Wherethrough to him he conquest this Lady,
By costly gifts cost with his own money:
How let us shew how Lodowick up he rose,
With curious coys and cletched on his clothes;
Then Alexander his minde unto him shew,
How the Lady all his malady knew:
And how she was of his coming content,
And how that he did purchase her consent:
Alexander convoyed Lodowick that night,
To the chamber of that fair Lady bright.
With whom he was in joy and mercurie,
And from henceforth ever kept kindnesse,
In such a sort where that one was content,
Without contrare the other gave consent:
So still they used in others company,
Rejoycing well all was done quietly:
Yet not the lesse it came unto the ears
Of all the court among knights and squires,
How Lodowick so stood in great kindnesse,
With that Lady wrought so in quietnesse:
So among them they did conspire his death,
Not regarding the Ladies favour nor feare.

The seven Sages.

So Alexander thereof got knowledging,
He armed his coyle for to gaine that thing:
And when they knew that Alexander took part,
Him to pursue from thence forth they lost heart:
Into so far from all such they did cease,
And suffered well Lodowick to go in peace.
Howbeit oft times into great jeopardy,
For Lodowicks cause Alexander was truly,
But to Lodowick such was not known a deal,
But the Lady knew it wondrous well.
Then in short time there was a message send,
Out of Egypt by writing making kend,
That of the lat was new decess their King,
Which abode them many a year did ring.
Requiring home Alexander to come,
And with honour receiue his own Kingdome:
For his Lady the Kings daughter and airt,
Of his absence took both fear and care:
Because the realme was desolate of an head,
Unto that houre since her father was dead:
Which soon he shew to Lady Florentine,
Pert thereafter to Lodowick shew it syne:
That he in haste behobed to depart,
Whereof they were both wonder sad in heart.
In haste he pass unto the Emperour,
Saying please your graces hie honour,
Forth of Egypt I haue receiued writing:
Making it known my fathers departing,
So it behobeth me to passe and receiue,
The crown thereof by right thereto I haue:

The seven Sages.

If that your grace will licence me to passe,
 Without your sabour I will no licence ask.
 Without your leabe or I should licence take,
 I had rather both crowne and realme forsake.
 In these essayes what euer it please your grace,
 Of very truth so standeth eben the case.
 The Emperour said, ye shall know verily,
 Of your departing mine heart is right heauie:
 For I held you amongst my seruants all,
 Into mine house euer the principall,
 But it becometh not an Emperour:
 Into no sort nor yet is his honour;
 To his seruants to make impediment,
 What time they be promoted to any rent.
 But far rather to help them that supplie,
 To greater giftes and higher dignitie,
 Therefore go ye from my Stewart receaue:
 As much gold as ye please for to haue.
 With my blessing and with mine inward heart,
 In God his name I free you to depart.
 And bade farewell and so he took goodnight,
 At the Emperour then at Lord squyre and knight
 Who was sole of his short departing:
 For he was lobed both with old and young.
 Then past Lord owick and with him Florentine,
 And on homeward conuoyed him myles nine:
 Alexander would let them no further go,
 But so: to see the dolour and the mo.
 When they departed whereto should I say more:
 It would haue made a wholmans heart right sore.

The seven Sages.

For very wo all they to ground fell down,
Good Florentine for wo she fell in frown:
Alexander then took her up again,
Comforted her of her dolour and paine,
And right so did to his fellow Lodowick,
Comforted him with many woordes such like:
Then said to him my good fellow and brother,
Whom I love best of men above all other:
In time to come for to keep you from shakth,
This I you say and to my Lady balth;
Touching secrets that is betwixt us two,
Keeping them quiet or ye will suffer wo:
Wherefore take heed and look right well about,
Do ye not so ye stand in right great doubt:
For well I wote another in my stead
Shall come but doubt and have you at such need,
With great hatred deceit and ails en die,
Both day and night shall you check and espie,
To see if they can challenge you with crime,
Wherefore beware and take good heed in time;
For if they can challenge you any way,
Or you rebuke surely they will assay:
With the Emperour in favour ye do stand,
Wherefore the more they will cast at your hand,
Then said Lodowick in so far as I may,
I shall beware both by night and by day:
But wo alace therein what shall I do,
When I have none that I dare lippen to
That I should want your faithfull companie,
I can not mend therefore full wo is me.

Pet

The seven Sages.

Yet I heartly require of you one thing,
Ye will receive from me this littlering.
Betwixt us two to be a remembrance,
Of two princes of Egypt and of France:
Alexander said the ring I will receive,
In remembrance of you still so to have:
But yet howbeit the ring I had not tane,
For remembrance from me no wise had gane:
So one another about the necks imbrait,
With great kindnesse and then about the waist,
But Florentine was so confounded in spirit;
She could do nought but sat her down to greite:
Alexander said, amenas now no greiting,
But I pray God grant us a merrie meeting
And so parted with hearts wonder two,
Unto their home eachone their gate did go.

Not long after the Kings Son of Spaine,
Came to the court in service to remaine:
Named Guydo and got that same office,
That Alexander had into service:
Also the Steward to him he did assigne,
That samine house the chamber and lodging,
That Alexander and Lodowick dwelt intill,
Which was but doubt all against Lodowicks will,
Howbeit the same no wise he could mend it:
But yet therewith his heart was sore offendit,
Lodowick to Guydo could keep no friendship;
As he did to Alexander of Egypt:
Wherefore Guydo against him took envy,
Howbeit they both in one chamber could ly.

The seven Sages.

And Lodowick had of Guydo such fear,
 That he durst nought to the Lady go near,
 In anenture that Guydo should espie,
 Of his secrets and them in open cry:
 Yet not the less of her he had such thought,
 Her companie to obtaine could he nought.
 For she could not his companie well want,
 So he again sometimes to her did haunt,
 When Guydo that percelving was not sleuth,
 On them to waite while that he knew the truth.
 That Lodowick had with Lady Florentine,
 So great kindnesse that he thought after spere,
 Considering well the truth that he did know,
 Sometime unto the Emperour he should shew.
 So in his minde he held it quietly,
 With false deceit while he his time might see.
 Upon a time the Emperour in his hall,
 Talking about among the nobles all:
 Praising greatly the wit and gentlenesse,
 Of Alexander the wise dome and kindnesse:
 He said he was both vertuous true and wise,
 To guyd an house right well he could devise:
 Then said Guydo and please your majestie,
 So far praised he ought not so to be:
 For so to be commended as ye were,
 A great treatour in your house hath he ben:
 The Emperour said tell on how that can be,
 Then said Guydo I shall you tell truly.
 To your daughter ye have a Lady faire,
 The which should be appearantly your aire.

And

The seven Sages.

And by the help the falsset and supplie,
Of him Lodowick hath done her villanie:
Even so nightly when Lodowick takes delite
He hath his will of that faire Lady white:
And all this came by the false sttell sight,
Of Alexander that he wrought day and night,
When the Emperour heard this tale to him told,
In his minde he was mooved manifold:
In that same time Lodowick came thro' the hall
And upon him the Emperour soon did call:
Saying what's this that I hear tell of thee,
If it be true thou shalt be hanged hee:
Then said Lodowick and please your noble grace
Ye will me shew thereof how stands the case,
Then said Guydo in open audience
Here I abow in your graces presence,
That Lodowick lyes with Lady Florentine,
So sure as stands on craige this head of mine:
And so he hath defiled the blood royall.
Which I shall prove on him in plaine battail:
On his body and thereat shall I stand,
Defend it now if thou dare take in hand.
Then said Lodowick please your majestie,
I am sakelesse of you he sayes on me:
And right falssetie he layeth on me such crime,
Which I shall prove whenever he thinks time;
So into God I trow to finde remead,
All this falsset shall light on his own head:
Then kest Guydo his globe down for a train,
Lodowick lowred and took it up again:
Saying

The seven Sages.

Saying, I will that Ladies same defend,
With heart and hand unto my liues end:
The Emperour then to them both did assigne,
A certain day of battell and fighting:
And to them both he bade silence and rest,
Then bade them passe where that they pleased best.
Then past Lodowick to the Lady fra hand,
And all the case he made her understant:
And how he was accused into presence,
Of her father in open audience:
And how that he assigned the fighting day,
And unto her on this maner can say,
Now Florentine my Lady fair and gent;
It now behoves to work with ailment:
Of you alwayes: for so the matter stands,
I cannot scape undead of Guydoes hands:
For why? if I had denyed to him battell
Then had I yeld my self as criminall,
And of the crime granted my self guiltie,
Wherefore force was to counterfit mislie:
Such like Guydo is wonder stout and strong,
In salt of armes he hath ben used long.
I never knew in no companie here,
But Alexander to fight might be his pere:
For I am weak and feeble of person,
And to his strength hath no comparison,
If I him meete in field what shall be then?
Without refuge I am but a dead man,
And so on me shall ly the cause and blame,
Then ye for ever shall tholge slander and shame.

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The seven Sages.

Then Florentine to Lodowick thus can say,
Since such a chance is come betwixt us tway:
And I think you despaired in one part,
And in this case over weak spirited in heart.
Yet neverthelesse where two illis both approach,
I think it best from the greatest to saue:
The first ill is, if ye you gallie grant,
Then shall I ay both wealth and worship want.
And ye also be put to cruell dead,
And I so; ay my life in langour lead:
The second is if ye to battell bound
Ye are so weak and feeble of person,
And Guydo is so strong, and als hardie,
That ye do not gainst him straike thre,
And so alwayes I can finde no remead:
How eber it go there is to you but dead,
Wherefore herein ye shall my counsell do,
Ye shall but late my father soon passe to;
And shew to him on your most humble wile,
That your father upon his death bed lyes.
Whereof now there is writings come you till,
Desiring him if that it be his will,
To prorogate the day of battell let,
That ye may go and come again but let:
In the meantime with your father to speak,
By the reason he lyes so wonder sick:
That ye may know his perfitte latter will,
So that ye may in all points to fulfill,
And so; to speak with him two words or thre;
Forth of this wo;lo or he depart and die.

And

The seven Sages.

And that ye may his blessing still obtaine,
With his own mouth then ye to looke his aene:
So when ye have obtained his licence,
To Alexander in all good haste pass hence:
Then secretly to him the matter shew,
How things stands perfectly let him know.
And him requite into this extream case,
That he would come and to supply your place:
Contrare Guydo and with him soz to fight,
Because your self to do the same have beght.
This counsell then it pleased Lodowick well,
Then as he said so did he every well.
Licence obtained and also prolonged the day,
To Alexander Lodowick took his journey,
Small rest he took but rode both day and night,
Till Egypt land he came unto right.
To the castle then came he on in by,
Where that the king Alexander did ly:
When the king got of Lodowick knowledging,
He marvelled great the cause of his coming:
Incontinent to meet him he is gane,
As his brother even so with him hath tane:
With all honour he did him there receiue,
As him became or he liked to have,
Then said Lodowick my brother dear and friend,
In time by gone and ever yet hath been:
Now at this time I let you understand
My life and death yet both into your hand.
He said brother make known to me you querrell
For life shall be God willing in no perrell.

Then

The seven Sages.

Then said Lodowick, ye remember ye shew,
At our parting some wordes which I finde true.
Saying I should in fellowship one have,
Into your dead per chance should me deceave:
And ly in waite my secrets to espy,
Which now I have right wonder well And I;
He said without I were more circumspect,
In which my self in some part did neglect:
For one Guydo the Kings Son of Spaine,
Into your dead with me he did remaine.
And by reason he my secrets not knew,
To my Lady I durst not well persw.
And so at length I could not long abstayn,
It chanced him know the secrets us betwene:
Then me accused befoze the Emperour,
Which unto me was utter displeasure.
And hath promised in battall to make good,
That I defyled the blimpertall blood:
So hand for hand in battell we must fight,
To counter him by mine hand I have heght,
This day eight dayes the battell should be done:
Quoth Alexander forsooth that is ower son.
More quoth Lodowick Guydo is stout and strong,
He hath been used in acts of wars long:
But I am weak and feeble as ye hand,
From his great dint I cannot me defend.
My Florentine therefore gave me counsell,
You for to shew the cause and matter battell.
For she beloves you as her faithfull friend,
For to this time ye have never been.

the

The seven Sages.

He trusses doubtlesse ye will kepe and supplie,
 Both means her in this necessitie:
 When Alexander to Lodowick can say,
 Is there any knowes ye came here away,
 But Florentine? (quoth he) forsooth not one:
 For each man crowes to France that I am gone,
 For to visite my father lying sick,
 These same wordes to the Emperour I did speak:
 So that effect he did prolong the day,
 And I at poise to you am come away.
 Quoth he thew forth what Florentine hade desire,
 What's the thing at me he did require,
 What counsell gabe Florentine to you?
 That I should help in what maner and how:
 When Lodowick said O my most constant friend
 Thus stands the case when this did he mein,
 Considering we two be wonder like,
 That ye shoud come with Gnydo battell strike:
 And none knowing but Florentine alane,
 The battell done yeto come home again:
 And I sklike in court to p̄sent me,
 As I had done theat and jeopardie,
 Alexander said the battell ye hade set,
 This day eight dayes to fight withoutten let,
 It is over tho't for even thus stands the case,
 I am not well be readie in such space:
 I can not see that I can well be there:
 Therefore but doubt what shall I say hereto,
 I can not tell nor wote not how to do,

And

The seven Sages.

And my subjects I have commanded haill,
That they be here the morne at my byrdail.
Keep I journey though I ride at the post,
Of my wedding the day is tint and lost:
If I go not and so keep the battell,
Then Florentine and ye are lost but fall,
Therefore Lodowick what think ye best to do?
What ye devise here I apply thereto.
Lodowick hearing such excuse reasonable,
To fall in swoon where that he stood was able,
Began to sigh and sorow manifold,
For to his heart catched was cares cold,
Saying, all wo and grief to me betides,
Dorow and care now commeth on every sides,
Verteibing that Alexander to him said,
Let be such hurt take comfort and be glad:
For I will not forsake you this voyage,
Though I should both tyme wife and heritages;
But ye shall hear in thought what I have tane,
Into so far as we two are like one,
And as ye know it is not long ago:
The Emperours court hither since I came fra;
Yet am I not well known in this countrie,
Many of my Lords as yet have not seen me,
And for that cause they know not my presence,
They take you for me in mine absence,
Therefore here shall ye tarie and abide,
And in my stead ye shall make my haire;
When hold the feast with great solemnitie,
And cause all things be done that done should be.

Pol-

The seven Sages. 111

Holobest my self in bodie be absent,
 Let nothing want more than I were present:
 To my renown pertaineth or honestie,
 Do I for you do ye such like for me:
 Except only when that ye passe to bed,
 With mine own wife holobest that ye her wed,
 Into my name and mine authoritie,
 Into that case for that ye faithfull be:
 And so but bafe I shall incontinent,
 Loup upon horse and to the battell went.
 And set my corse for you into the field,
 When your action debait with spear and shield:
 And if that God grant me the victorie,
 For to banquet Guydo your enemy:
 Without tarte I shall return again,
 And ye such like in court for to remain;
 As ye had done the principall at your sell,
 So with honour in court still shall ye dwell.
 This being done Alexander took good night,
 Letting no wit unto this Lady bright:
 Unto the court for hand took his journey,
 No man knowing the matter but they tway:
 So Lodowick bafe at home still with the Queen,
 Into Egypt as Alexander he had ben,
 And one the moine Lodowick with nobellie,
 Wast to the court with great solemnitie:
 Even as it wast Alexander the king,
 And spoused his wife at the church with a ring:
 No man knowing but Alexander it had ben,
 That had spoused with great honour the Queen.
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The seven Sages.

Then held the feast with mirth and merinolle,
Great honour, gloze, triumph and blythnesse,
All the great Lords and nobles that were there,
They made great mirth and solace singulare.
Then when night came all men bowed to rest,
To go to bed the byrd she thought it best.
But when Lodowick past to bed with the Queen
A naked sword he late them two between,
Whereof she had great marvell and wonder,
On the first night that they should ly asunder.
So he each night with the Queen shd remain,
Her bedfellow while the King came again.
Nothing she said but yet miche she thought,
By the reason the truty that she knew nought.
Now let Lodowick and the Queen hyde at home,
And we will speak of Alexanders fame.
Then came bell bethe day of toynament,
Alexander to the Emperour he went,
Then said I most redoubted soveraigne,
Unto your grace now I am come again:
Left my father in great infirmesse,
Doubting nothing but shortly he shall die.
For to debate this battell with my blood,
With my two hands to make my querrell good.
For God willing to all it shall be kend,
Now I justice my querrell shall defend,
The Emperour said ye do all that ye can,
Conforme unto a noble gentle man.
For beleve well if your querrell be right,
Ye shall triumph like a horned knight.

The seven Sages.

Fortoun will labour your quarrell and action,
 How best ye fight contrate an champion.
 Then quietly he passed under care,
 To Florentine the hie gate forward sure,
 Of whose coming she was right wonder glad,
 She him imbrast they kist and after said:
 Blest be the time that ye are now come here,
 From all plour to mirth hath changde my chere.
 Ye are als welcom to me now your alone,
 As any man on life excepting one;
 For ay with me ye took to tiew a part,
 Quoth he, Lady I thank you with mine heart.
 Where is Lodowick I pray you to me shew,
 And how he doth I would ye let me know.
 He said, Lodowick was into great blisnesse,
 In mirth and soy, and in great merinesse:
 There is noman liues in more lustie life,
 For he hath now married a gay young wife:
 Married (quoth she) I think that cannot be,
 It is for truth forsooth Madame, said he:
 Even on the mozne after I took voyage,
 It was assigned the day of marriage.
 The banket was prepared right well I ken,
 For thereto called was many noble men.
 All things was dyet, there was no more ado,
 But on the mozne she chutch for to go to:
 The Lady said, what woman may that be?
 He said, forsooth she is a great Labe:
 Lustie of love right verteous and fair,
 Of that countrie she is appearand aire.

Quoth

The seven Sages.

Quoth Florentine, thort kindnesse there hath been
Or else old love that hath been them between:
But if such thing that Lodowick now hath wrought
For coming here I think it is for nought:
Her countenance to keep bade fill the cop,
Howbeit I trow she list not drink a drop.
Then Alexander perceaving her patience,
Her lowlinesse, and gentle countenance,
So longer he would hold her into noy,
But turne her sturt incontinent to joy.
Quoth he, Ladie, be blith, and make good care,
All he hath done is done for your welfare:
We know right well none is in wo, lo moze like
In all fassouns, nor I'm to Lodowick:
So when he came, and told mee his errand,
Even on the morn my byrdall should have stand:
And by reason I could not keep dyet,
For yet to bide the day of byrdall set
Because on him so strangely came the case,
Kindnesse causdeme to put him in my place:
So I causde him in my place for to passe,
So man knowing but the same man I was,
And wed my wife as I had been my self,
And I to take the chance of the battell:
For if that I while the byrdell was done
Had bidden home, I had not come so soon:
To the sixth day of battell that was set,
Yet then I thought my byrdell should not let:
So I him left in my realm to be king,
While I return, and you to honour bring.

The seven Sages.

If she was blith it needes not for to talk,
He took his leave, and to chálmer did walk:
But Florentine there was none that could tell
Of very truth but it was Lodowicks sell.
So on the mozn the day of battell was,
And Alexander unto the field can passe,
Into such gear as then to him effeared,
And on his steed so stoutly he him steared;
Then lighted down like a keen cruell knight,
To the Emperour the hie way raiked right,
Befoze Guydo thir words to him he said,
My great Sovereign a cryme is on me laid
By this Guydo, falsly befoze your face
He me accuse befoze your noble grace,
Saying that I had carnall knowledging
Of your daughter, and her flesh defiling,
Which to your Grace it wote great dishonour,
And I suchlike to you a great traitour:
But here I swear, and als affirmes surely
By the great God that bled his blood for me,
By the Evangelis that our Saviour spake,
And all the mights that God in world did make,
That I never in no manner of way
Knew your daughter, as Guydo did you say:
My minde was not to do her dishonour,
Into no way to your Grace displeasure:
And I this day by help of God his grace
Upon Guydo shall prye be befoze your face,
What he hath lyed in despight of his heart,
And all his kin, and who will take his part.

Then

The seven Sages.

Then said Guydo, yet I say once again,
Before your grace thou art a traitour plain:
And als I swear by God omnipotent,
With thy own flesh his daughter thou hast spent,
To thy pleasure and thy soul appetite,
Ay when thou list, or therein had delite,
Ever each night had her at thy pleasour,
Which was to her great shame and dishonour;
And als unto the Emperours Pasetie,
Upon treason which I shall prove on thee,
Upon thy head, in contrate all thy kin,
Come and defend, if thou wilt worship win.
Then heraulds cride with loud voice he on hight,
Together go, we pray God shew the right:
Incontinent they stended on their steedes,
Like ballant men into their weirlike weids,
As two bold beirs together both they ran,
Each one was like to ding down horse and man,
Speirs spzang like sparks, as fire doth off the flint,
There durst no man endure their doubtlesome dint:
When speirs were past their shinand swozds drew,
While plait & mail all into flinders flew: (And,
Their swozds they swang while their steds swat at
The gilden spurs the chebale skin throw glyds:
froth ran fra fronts of the fierce forste steeds,
While horse and man both at the basnet bleids:
Stif strikes they strike, of others stood none aw,
While Alexander at last an vantage saw,
On Guydoes neck a naked place he spies,
Whereat good speed he strikes once swiffe or thise,

The seven Sages.

While at the last therat he strake so lang,
 All the barnesse was there away he dang:
 Syne thereafter but any moze delay
 He put Guydo into a felloun fray.
 Guydo that sees again upon him sets,
 Of his gorget a buckle or two he frets:
 And strake his gorget down upon his brest:
 Alexander an other straik waild neist
 Upon his neck, which he perceav'd was bairst,
 With a l his strength a straik he laid on there,
 While both their stædes stakred upon the stound,
 And Guydoes head it happed on the ground,
 Then lighted down, and took it in his hand,
 To the Ladie it sent into presand,
 Whereof she was right wonder blith and glaid,
 To her father the same she bure and said,
 Father, behold the head which upon mee
 So falsly leid such feid unfaithfully,
 Which you and mee at his power defamed,
 But the blamelesse himself hath made unblamed.
 The Emperour said, the vallant victorie
 By Lodowick wrought is now shoun patiently,
 Belæving well that Lodowick it had been,
 Then said Lodowick, it may be heard and sen:
 For ye have saved this day from shame and skaithe
 Your own honour, and als my daughters baith:
 And from thenceforth the moze as ye shall stand
 In my savour I height you by my hand:
 And hereafter who ever doth you defame,
 In that behalf he shall incur my blame,

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The seven Sages.

And at my hand shall bee accusde of cryme,
That such thing talkes of you at any tyme.
Then Alexander said to the Emperour,
The victoꝝ is ay at Gods pleasure,
Who trust in him no way he will them wack,
For their just cause he will not throw aback,
But alwayes will defend the innocent,
And will not thole the sakelesse to bee spent,
Since he hath sent me to the victoꝝ,
Thanks evermoze to him allanerly.
But now my most redoubted Lord and King,
Humbly your grace I require of a thing,
from my father when I last did depart,
He was so vert with sicknesse at his heart,
That wee believed nought but sudden dead,
And now this case as yee know come on head,
That I might not at that time ay remain,
Now I would have licence to passe again,
To understand in what state all things stands,
And thereafter to put rule in my lands:
And if hee bee of sicknesse convalett,
While I return I shall take little rest.
The Emperour said, your language likes me well,
But I would not, so mot my soul have seel,
Want your service, nor your dayly presence,
Yet not the lesse I grant you good licence,
For such affaires as yee have shewn to mee,
To passe again into your own countrie:
Then took he leade, and bade each one good night,
To his own realm rade hame that gate full right:

The sevenSages.

In this mean time Lodowick thought great lang,
To look about to the wall head bid gang,
And perceaved an hoyselman coming fast,
Then Alexander knew well at the last,
Whom when he saw, he was both blith and glaid,
Then heartfully receaved him, and said,
O most true freind of all my freinds alibe,
Whose great kindnesse my wits can not describe:
Ye are welcome so far here as I may,
How have ye done, and sped in your journey?
O what an end have ye brought it unto?
Quoth he, Lodowick, now have ye lesse ado
For of befoze, for Guydo is departed,
Wherefoze be blith, and wonder merrie hearted:
I wot I sent his head to Florentine,
To her father she it presented fine:
Wherefoze go ye unto the Emperour,
For now ye stand far moze in his favour,
For ever ye did befoze at any time,
And als ye are made clean of all the crime,
That Guydo layed with your fair Ladie,
Touching your fame and your own honestie.
Then said Lodowick, it needs me say no moze,
My life oft times pee have preserv'd befoze,
And now my life and als my honestie
Suchlike preserv'd the same of a Ladie,
Which by no way I can not recompence,
But my heartie will and benevolence:
Then they embraist, at others took goodnight,
And Lodowick rode to the Emperour right:

The seven Sages.

No man knowing Alexanders absence,
For all his court beleved his own presence:
Suchlike his quæen the matter nothing knew,
For no man was that such thing to her shew.
Then when night came Alexander him sped
Withouttarrie unto the quæens own bed,
Down in his armes hee hint her in all haile,
With fair sweet words right tenderly embraile,
With all pleasure that did thereto pertain,
And into bed a king do to a quæen.
Quoth she, wherefore since first yee did mee wed,
And ebery night I lay unto your bed,
Per never shew love nor kindnesse to mee,
For no friendship while now, How may this bee?
For I believe yee had judged some crime
In my contrare, which never in my time
I committed unto your noble grace,
Whereof I am a Conied in this case:
Out of my minde it can not well depart,
But still remain at the cuites of mine heart.
Quoth he, therout why are yee discontent?
All that I did was done in good intent.
In good intent, quoth she, there I say nay.
For ebery night yee laid betwene us tway
A naked sword, and never cobet more
Of my person, and know no cause wherefore.
I did all that, said he, for probatioun,
And als of love a great confirmatioun
Betwene us two of everlasting love,
On such a sort, I thought I would you prove.

The sevenSages.

In all my dayes yett shall not finde again
 A naked sword in bed between us twaine:
 Yet not the lesse the queen said in her thought,
 In all my dayes forgett shall I it nought:
 That love thou throwes for to obtain of mee
 In thy despiht I shall it weake on thee.
 Yet nought she said, but thought it in her minde
 How she might turn her love to other kinde.
 There was a knight whom she loved of before,
 And from henceforth she loved him more and more:
 At last they two bethought them of one thing,
 How they might best slay and destroy the king:
 Between them two a conceat soon they fand,
 Gave him prysen, and thought that he fra hand
 Should be but dead, and yet his complexion
 It was so strong, it took no infection
 In his intrals, but brake forth from his heart
 Into the flesh, and shew the self outward:
 So by working within a short processe
 It was converted in other sore sicknesse,
 Incurable ay holden among us,
 And turnd into a leper Lazarus,
 While that no man with patience might him see,
 And all the Lords despisd his companie,
 Saying, It is a thing right odious
 A loathsome leper for to ring ober us,
 For his chldren, and all his whole offspring
 Withouften shall have the samine thing,
 And I ...port him of all dignitie
 They quite dennde for his infirmite,

Out

The seven Sages.

Out of his realm as a begger him drabe,
While he behav'd to beg among the labe.
In the meane time of Rome the Emperour
Payed his due det wherefoze was great dolour,
Who was father to Florentine so fair,
Of the impire she was apearand air,
And with advise of his counsell did wed
Lodowick her lobe, and brought him to her bed,
Whereby now he was made principall Emperour,
And got the crown thereof with great honour:
In that same time of France the noble king,
Lodowicks father in likewise made ending;
And payed his debt, as naturall course him gabe,
And both all thing that ever did life receave,
And so Lodowick came Emperour thow chance,
Suchlike he was the mightie king of France:
About them both at once so did his reigne,
And both at once hee had in governing.
Then Alexander who was lately deposed
From his kingdome, the which he shold have joyed,
Heard tell for truth Lodowick was Emperour,
And king of France, and thereof possessour,
Unto himself he said, and took in minde,
I will go see if Lodowick bee kinde:
For diverse times I have separd my life,
Both for himself, and suchlike for his wife:
Now will I go, and to him make my main,
He will help me, I am sure and certain:
So on a night Alexander up he rose,
Even as he might poyely put on his cloathes,

He

The seven Sages.

Hee stepped forth with staffe into his hand,
With cop and clapper unto the Emperours land:
When hee came there he sat down at his gate,
Among the leper some almons for to get.
The Emperour came forth upon a day
Of his palace, to sport him and to play:
After his play again to palace past,
And to dinner each one they bowed fast:
All the leper they clapped and they cryed,
But at that time all almons was denyed.
So Alexander clapped as the rest,
Though they got nought to bide yet he thought best;
Unto the time the Emperour was set,
Believing well some almons for to get:
So up he rose, and near the gate he went,
Thereat knocked with meek minde and intent.
The porter said, Who's that that knocks so bold?
Noth he, a poore with you some errand would,
Requiring you for love and charitie,
That yee will do some small message to me.
The porter said, whom to is that message?
Few are herein of whom ye have knowledge.
Alexander said, Good freind with your pleasure,
Mine errand is unto the Emperour.
The porter said, Doth your errand pertain
To the Emperour? I know not what yee mean:
Shew the matter, and what is your intent,
So shall I tell your tale incontinent.
Hee said, I you require now for Gods love,
And for his sake that sits in heaven above,

The seven Sages.

Go yee and tell unto the Emperour,
A man is here in sicknesse and dolour,
Loth and leper, and lazarus yee see,
Requires his grace for part of charitie,
For God his love that creat hath all thing,
And Alexanders sake of Egypt King,
That he will grant mee licence in his hall,
To eat his meat before his nobles all.
The porter said, I wonder of your wit,
Within this hall that yee desire to sit:
For all his hall of noble men is fow,
And they at meat forsooth if they saw you,
They should abhor, and eat that time no more,
I think it best to hold you still therefore.
Quoth Alexander, I pray you of goodnesse,
For God his sake, and for his gentlenesse,
To your Master yee would shew my message,
Yet I almons yee shall not want your wage.
The porter said, so far as yee require
For God his love, and heartly you desire,
Your errand do, the same to take on hand,
While I return see that yee here still stand.
Then the porter said to the Emperour,
Hailling him with reverence and honour,
Did his message as hee had got command,
The Emperour heard, and understood fra hand,
When he heard the name of Alexander King,
Quoth he in haile that man to mee yee bring,
How horrible or uglyme that hee bee,
In all good haste yee fetch him here to mee.

That

The seven Sages.

That he may eat his meat into my hall
Into my presence before my Lords all.
Then the porter unto the gate is gone,
And Alexander brought to the hall anone,
Ordaining him into the hall a place,
Where he might eat before the Emperours face:
When he was well refreshed at his own will,
A Gentleman belibe he cald him till,
Saying, Good Sir, require the Emperour,
If that it be his will and his pleasure,
For Gods love first, and king Alexanders sine,
He would mee give a cup full of his wine.
The Gentleman said, That will I do to thee,
But I believe that such thing can not be:
For if yee once of his cup take a drinke,
To drinke therein he shall no more I think:
Yet not the lesse thy errand I shall do,
Let him advise if he consents thereto.
The message then to the Emperour he shew,
But so soon as that he the errand knew,
For Alexanders sake the cup he send,
Fild full of wine that of the best was kend,
Drank his pleasure, and then he put the rest
In his bottell that time he thought it best:
Off his finger a small gold ring he threw,
Which the Emperour long time before that knew,
Because the same he had given him before
In signe of love and frendship evermore:
Which Alexander in the cup let fall,
Then bade the Copperbear it throw the hall,

The seven Sages.

To the Emprour, and the same let him see,
Who said my freind I shall it do truly :
The cup and ring withoutten processe moze
To the Emprour the Copper soon it bare.
The Emperour how soon this ring he saw,
Incontinent full well he did it know,
And wist right well it was the same ring
That he had given to Alexander king
Into friendship, when ather did depart
Out of the court, whereof he at his heart
Was sorrowfull, for he knew no remead
But Alexander his companion was dead :
Else he thought this poor man marvellous
Had gotten this ring by some great jeopardie:
He commanded the leper not depart,
While he had heard moze secrets of his heart,
For he knew not by labour or nothing
What man that was that had sent him the ring.
After dinner they took him quietly,
And said, Tell me the truth and veritie,
And feynie not to tell me of this thing,
When, where, and how ye hapned on this ring:
Alexander said, and please your Majestie,
What is the cause ye speare such thing at me:
Ye have knowledge of this ring I perceave,
If it was yours ye know where ye it gave.
The Emperour said, right wonder well I know
The ring, and man suchlike if I him saw.
Alexander said, I marvell that can be,
Ye know the ring, and no way you know me,

For

The seven Sages.

For Alexander I am of Egypt king,
Sometime I was to whom y^e gave this ring.
When he that heard, to his heart strake a sound,
For very start fell flatlings to the ground:
Then rent his robe, and kest his clothes him fro,
When he perceaved Alexander was so,
With soze sighings, and sobbings to him said,
My dear fellow, how is this on you laid?
Such soze sicknesse, and great infirmittie,
My heart it b^reaks such thing on you to see:
Y^e are my life, my soul, and my welfare,
My only freind and fellow but compare,
Where is your co^rse that was so cleinly cled?
Your bold body that was so finely sed?
Your puissant pith, and state that was so stout,
Your manly strength whereof each man had doubt?
Quoth Alexander, this great infirmittie,
And uncleannesse which y^e now on me see,
For the great faith, true kindnesse and freindship
That y^e shew when I left you in Egypt,
To wed my wife, there your fidelitie
Caused this sicknesse to chance upon me:
For into bed with my wife when y^e lay,
A naked sword y^e laid betw^en you tway:
She believing it was not y^e but I,
So scemmedly in bed could with her ly,
And for that cause she had me at batrent,
An other squite she choosde in loberent,
Between them two purposde to poyson mee,
Which is conuert in this infirmittie:

For th

The seven Sages.

Forth of my realm they have me driven and chaist,
And to return thereto I have no trust.

The Emperour took him about the neck,

For verie love, and said in this effect:

O my most best beloved true brother,

Whom evermore I loved above all other,

I so: row so: in such so: you to se

Without remead mastered in miserie:

But ye must thole, and take in patience,

And if there may bee found any defence,

Help o: remead that may your sicknesse save,

For gold o: gear but doubt ye shall it have:

We shall not fail to fetch fine physicians,

With cunning clarkes, and perfitte practicians;

For yet shall misse for many mediciners,

For so: payment to probe all potingers,

With counsels of masters and doctours fine,

For all sicknesse that can give medicine:

Into this need if they can you supplis,

It shall not want for gold, gear, nor money,

To get you help we shall not spare to spend,

Though we should seek unto the wo:ld end,

Therefore be blith, and take nothing in thought,

Though all the wo:ld your health it shall be sought:

Then to a chalmers belibe they could him bring,

As well prepard, wanting no kinde of thing

Of honestie, nor yet was necessarie,

For ease nor health where his bed was and lair.

In this mean time the Emperour gart prepare

His messengers to passe, and seek all where

Can

The seven Sages.

Cunning doctors, and physicians profound
 That was expert in any land or ground,
 Of whom there come to him in workes threes
 Thirtie doctors cunning in all degree,
 The most expert, and had experience
 In such affaires belonging that science,
 Of soze supplie pertaining physick syne,
 And was extold Masters of Medicine:
 To whom a none the Emperour then said,
 Of your comming Masters I am right glad:
 This is the cause why I send for you all,
 I have a freind the which lyes sick and thzall,
 Incurable which only wee suspect,
 As is leper, wherewith he is infect,
 Whereof if ye could make him hail and sound,
 I would give gold many a thousand pound:
 All the riches I have, and other gear
 I would it give to have him hail and fere.
 The Masters said, We shall do diligence,
 By arte, physick, and naturall science,
 Together with all possibilitie
 Him to recure of his infirmite,
 Please it your grace, ye must us pardon all
 We must have sight of the person principall:
 Which all thirtie at once when they him saw,
 Incontinent this sicknesse they did know,
 And said, It was a sicknesse incurable,
 Which to cemead no moztall man was able.
 When the Emperour them heard deliber so,
 At his heart rute he was right wonder wo,

Remit,

The seven Sages.

Remitting all to the help and calling,
Of God above that help can all such thing:
The Emperour called unto him godly men
Forth of all parts where that he could them ken,
That were debout with minde and thought inwart
Desiring them right humble with his heart,
That they would pray to God of his good grace,
To show their prayer if they could health purchas
To Alexander which was a King with crown:
By their fasting and als devotion.
And als himself fasted and prayed daylis
That God might have of his good friend pittie:
Upon a day Alexander alone,
Lying in bed in heart all too begone:
Praying to God for some help and supplie,
He heard a voice saying to him on hie:
Alexander if that the Emperour,
Desireth thine health thine help and thy succour,
Let him go soon with his own hands twa,
His two young Sons incontinent he sla:
The which his wife at one burden them bare,
At the last time she was in child-bed lair.
Wash thy body with the two babies blood,
Thy flesh shall be as fair, as clean, as good,
As ever it was in any time beforen,
As the flesh of a babe new boyn:
Alexander heard and thus said to him self,
I think it not needfull this tale to tell:
For to be shown it's not expedient,
Nature thereto by no way will consent.

The seven Sages.

No wonder was his heart for to be wa,
For a stranger his own two Sons to sla,
Though I be now in such extremitie,
Such a vaine voice shall not be shewn for me,
Yet not the lesse the Emperour night and day.
Continually at his devotion lay,
Praying to God to send help and supplie,
To Alexander King of Egypt should be:
So at the last came to the Emperour,
A voyce saying, why maketh thou more dolour;
For to get health to Alexander King,
Since to himself is shewn the samine thing:
The Emperour then to Alexander went,
Saying, be blyth and merrie in intent,
O my good friend since God of his goodnesse,
Hath shewn remead and health for your sicknesse,
Unto your self alone so secretlie,
I pray you shew what fashoun it shall be,
God is remead to all upon him calleth,
To them supplie in sundrie sorts he sheweth,
And since so is such secrets to you shewn
I would the same ye should make to me known,
To get your health if I might help therein,
That to welfare again we might you win:
I cure no gold nor counts no worldes gear,
So I again might have you whole and seir:
I count no cost, nor yet none other thing,
So you again to health it may soon bring.
Hold not your minde into no sort from me,
In any thing that may your health supplie:

The seven Sages.

For might I deale your sicknesse into thre,
Ye should not have so great infirmitie:
My wife and ye the two part ye should have,
And the third part my self it should receave:
I knew I as ye were ye may have support,
It to receave the time should be right short:
Therefore fear not for me to tell the truth,
To help your self see no way ye be flueh.
Then Alexander answered with minde so meek,
Howbeit that I fifteen times were more sick:
Even at the point of the most cruell dead,
I cannot shaw the cause of my remead.
For I would not that such a thing were shewn,
For I would not to any make it known:
For to be shewn it is so odious,
And to nature so done contrarious,
Into this case ye must hold me excused,
To have mine health such way quite I refused.
The Emperour said my only friend and brother,
Whom with mine heart I love above all other:
Have me in traist have me in no despare,
But the whole truth I pray you me declare,
The thing is not possible to be done,
You for to cure but it shall be had soon.
Therefore I you require of better head,
Hyde not from me that may be your remead:
Alexander said, since even so is your will,
The whole fashion I will declare you till:
With heartie minde humbly praying your grace,
Since your will is that I shew you the case:

The seven Sages.

That ye will take my words in patience,
And pardon me where that I make offences:
For ye will think my words far by reason,
And were therefore your Grace grant me pardon
With and reason my talk will both impugne,
Best were therefore in time to hold my tongue.
The Emperour said for his sake that you bought,
Withoutten fear shew me you minde and thought
Ye shall me finde to you trais and constant:
Unto your health there is nought ye shall want,
Therefore shew forth your minde if you it please,
What ye shall say nothing shall me disease.
Quoth Alexander I will please your intent,
As it was shewn to me in verament.
Yet once again your Grace I will protest,
That my sharp words your minde nothing molest,
By a great voice to me it was rebealed,
By a strange way how that I may be healed,
Your own two sons your self them for to sla,
And my body wesch with the blood of tha,
This is the way wherethow I may be haill,
Which is to you a thing unnaturall:
That the father his own two sons should kill,
With his own hands for any strangers beill.
And is contrare the course of naturall law,
This was the cause such thing I durst not shaw.
The Emperour said ye saile far to me there,
What calleth your self to be here a stranger,
For in true faith and so my soul have seill,
As mine own self I love you even as well:

The seven Sages.

For if I had ten balrnes perchance and mo,
To get your health there should not one of the
Soon be unslain, I shortly you declare,
Of this matter now we will speak no more:
Go ye to rest and make no more ado,
With help of God all to good shall come to,
The Emperour he waited day and night,
And watched about what time that best he might
Come to his chake his own two Sons to sla,
So on a day the Emperice forth could ga,
With her Ladies aille in the morning,
To take pastime into a green garding:
The Emperour saw and to chamber him sped,
Where the two babes lay sleeping on their bed:
Incontinent his whinger forth he drew,
With his own hands his own two Sons he slew;
Cutted their throates and then kepted the blood,
Howbeit the same contrare his heart it stood:
So marbell was howbeit his heart was wo,
He them begot and were his children two.
And with that blood Alexander did wash,
With his own hands all his body and flesh:
Which was also safe incontinent and cleen,
As any time befoze had ever been.
And also good like in person and visage,
As when he was but twentie yers of age.
The Emperour then knew well by his colour,
By his fassoun his face and portraiture:
It was but doubt Alexander truely,
Wherefoze in heart right wonder blyth was he.

The seven Sages.

For he before knew not but this and so,
Whether it was Alexander or no.
But then doubtlesse Alexander he knew,
Without despere it was Alexander true:
Kist him and said, O my dear tender friend,
Since first we knew and ever moze hath been:
Of your person I have the knowledge,
Of your favour your face and your visage:
Which many time I desired to see,
To eat and drink, and be in company:
Bless be the time such children I begat,
That hath you brought to the state ye are at:
But yet none wist that the children were slaine,
But Alexander and the Emperour alane:
The Emperour said, since God of his goodnesse,
Hath made you whole of all your soze sicknesse:
I shall ordain for you right quietly,
To passe a space in honest company:
Out from this place but eight or myles ten,
To that effect that none here shall you ken:
And on the morn ye shall send a message,
Of your coming making to me knowledge:
Then shall I come with blyth and merie spee it,
Into all haste call me you for to meet:
Then still with me alwayes ye shall remain,
While we abide to get your realm again:
Of this counsell Alexander was content,
So as they said was done incontinent.
On the next day came to the Emperour,
A messenger who hailed him with honour:

Shew,

The seven Sages.

Shewing to him as they had gotten command,
King Alexander of Egypt was at hand.
The Emperice heard and was right wonder glad,
To the Emperour she hasted her and said,
O my good Lord be blyth and make good chære,
King Alexander they said is comming hère:
Whom with we oft in great blythnesse have ben,
This many day by gone hath not him sen:
And would your grace be so good to make gate,
Him soz to meet he would be blyth I waite:
I and my Ladies into our best array.
Shall passe with you and meet him by the way,
This being done as yet nothing she knew,
That the father his own two Sons flew,
The Emperour said if that it be your will,
That same journey blythly I will go till:
Then rode they forth an honest companie,
Lords, Knights, Ladies with great solemnite,
Then as they rode royallie through the street,
In the mid-way they Alexander did meet,
Who hailed other with all humillite
With land and gloze and honour that might be;
There was kindnesse, and there was great kissing,
There was blythnesse, there was in armes bracing:
There was kneeling and there was courtesie,
With rederence and great solemnite.
After talking with good and true intent,
All together into the palace went.
Time come of meat all was at table set,
Nothing wanted that needfull was to get.

Alexander

The seven Sages.

Alexander was set at the big dease,
With the Emperour and the Emprice at meesse:
As they were talking into merueille,
The Emperour said unto his own Emprice,
O Florentine mine own good wife and love,
I think mine heart in joy exalted above:
That ye do make Alexander such cheer,
And is so blith that he is comming heer:
She said forsooth could I it better make,
It should be done for Alexanders sake,
Should not his comming ben to us gladnesse,
And in speciall to you a great kindnesse?
For ye had not come to this dignitie,
Where ye are now forsooth had not ben he,
And diuerse times he hath saved your life,
Principall he was that got me to your wife:
The Emperour said your wit well I allow,
That thinks on them that was so good to you:
Then I pray you take good heed what I say,
Into this hall saw ye not the last day:
A loth leper before your table sat:
Both meat and drinke as ye saw some he got:
And for Gods love, and King Alexanders sake,
Desired a drinke which I gart to him take:
She said my Lord, that man right well I saw,
A more ugly yet never one did know,
The Emperour said, one thing I you demand,
Which I beleue ye will discusse fra hand:
I put the case that leper man had ben
King Alexander, that ye see with your eene.

And

The seven Sages.

And his remead and health in your hand lay,
Euen with the blood of your own SONS tway.
Behov'd soz to be bathed all about,
Would ye not then with a stiffe heart and stont:
Right well consent that both their bloods were shed
To the intent that his health might be had?
Their throates cutted, and do them both to dead,
So Alexander therethrow might get remead.
And make him halle euen as ye see him now?
That would I do (quoth she) God I avow.
Had we ten sons gotten as two betwixen,
I would consent to see them with mine axe:
Incontinent to see them dead and flaine,
Into that case to get his health again,
They being flaine with my power and pith,
Mine own two hands should wash him well therewith
Rather noz I should leaue him in such need,
I would not cure to see their throates bleed.
For God again might send us bairnes anew,
But neber again a friend so trait and trew:
When the Emperour these words by her heard said
Into his heart he was both blith and glad:
And said to her, good Florentine my wife,
Had ye rather save Alexanders life,
And healed of soze noz have your SONS liband,
Truly (quoth she) that here I take on hand:
Because therfore to him ye are so kind,
I will you shew the inward of my minde,
The loth leper that sat into mine haw,
That I and ye both eat and drink we saw:

She

The seven Sages.

She said, He was most leper Lazarous,
That ever come within a noble house,
I merveled great wherefoze that thing was wrought,
Within your hall such a bairne should be brought.
So you I trowed it should come in your offence,
That such person should come in your presence,
But since your grace suffered such thing to be,
I was content and well allowed with me.
The Emperour said, had ye the truth then kend,
As I beleve ye had not been offended,
Good Florentine now I will make you sure,
Which man it was that sat on your hall stoure.
I will you show but any feynyeing,
Alexander it was of Egypt King,
Which at your table now sitteth presentlie,
Quoth she my Lord, I think that cannot be:
Alexander that now sitteth at our table,
That is a thing not liklie to be able:
For Alexander that sitteth here presentlie,
Is halle and feir pleasant to look and see,
Without sicknesse of bodie sound and cleine,
Blyth of visage with two fair chrystall eyne:
Curious of coyle a comely creature,
So was he not that sat into the floure.
But of his lyze was loth and horrible,
And had sicknesse which was uncurable,
And so is not now Alexander King:
And I marvell ye shou d say such a thing.
Mine heart (quoth he) God hath send him remead
Whow me and you and by our Sons dead:

The seven Sages.

Mine heart nor hand sozmoth no aw I stood,
To cut their throats and bath him in their blood.
So by Gods grace he is made whole and sœr
A clean person as ye now sœ him hær:
Then she began to mourn and to make sozrow,
As nature would howbeit she said befozrow.
That she had rather sœ all her children dead,
Into that case o2 he wanted remead:
Yet not the lesse the naturall course and kinde,
In this behalfe changed both thought and minde:
The heartly love and motherly pittie,
Which nature gîves in the mother to be,
Could not suffer nor yet no way sustaine,
But with soze heart she grat with both her eîne,
The Emperour perceîved her take such pine,
To stanch her start he said, O good Florentine,
Though ye be two, I can you no way wyte,
For well I know ye had love and delpte:
Inward kindnesse unto your Sons two,
I can well think that your heart should be two:
Yet not the lesse I pray you cease of sozrow,
All will be well I finde you God to bozrow.
The nourishes hearing of these tythands,
For great heart b2ek they cryd & wzong their hands
They knew nothing what soz to doo2 say,
Past to the chamber where the two bairnes lay,
Belæving well for none other remead:
But finde the bairnes in their bed lyng dead.
They found them both at their pastyme playing,
In great blythnesse and gîving God lobing,

Peber

The seven Sages.

Never more blith since first houre they were boyn,
Nothiing knowing that their two throats were shorn
The nourishes unto the Emperour went,
And how all was they shew incontinent:
How his two Sons was living blyth and glad,
And how about their two necks that they had:
A cirkill of Gold where that the knyfe had gane,
Which knyfe from them so soon their life had tane:
Wherethroughe there was great mirth in the cite,
In the palace and all the companie:
That God such grace to these two babs had granted
That being slaine their lyses yet they not wanted
Wherefore there was throughe the cities and towns
Great prayers made with many orisons:
Lobing the Lord life to these babes lent,
And granted health to sick and impotent:
Bankets they made with joy and merinelle,
Mensrels made mirth ceased was all sadnesse:
When Florentine she blisse that same day
She did conceive and beare such sons tway,
Nothiing was there the space of fourtie dayes,
But all kind mirth blithnesse sports and playes,
Great toznaments with bairded hoise running:
Some other dayes with growhounds were hunting
This being done the Emperour did prepare,
A great armie of manhood singulare,
And pass away with all their fellowship:
With Alexander again into Egypt,
Set him again into his royaltie,
In his own realme with great solemnitie.

Rehe-

The seven Sages.

Restored him whole to all his possessions,
With due service of his Lords and barrouns.
That good Jewell King Alexanders Quēn,
In adulterie that so long time hath been.
With her lover what he was knight or squire,
As they deserved was both burnt in a fire:
In this mean time the Emperour chanced to have
A fair sister the which to wife he gaue:
To Alexander and fortified the band,
Of great kindnesse which evermore did stand:
Betwixt them two with heartie mind and thought
That the one did the other would have wrought.
So Alexander being set down at rest,
In his realme the Emperour thought it best:
For to return again to his Emprye,
And took good night at their own hearts desire.
They were right too to part ye may consider,
But yet ay still friends may not bide together:
So they departed with merinesse and joy,
Alexander homeward did him conboy,
Then after this Alexander him dyest,
To guyde his realme alwayes as he thought best.
With manlinesse and wisdom in him sell,
He banquish't all against him did rebell.
His enemies about him all he danted,
So thow wisdom of his will nought he wanted
When he was in all his gloze peace and might,
Into his minde it came upon a night,
How his father in the sea did him sing,
Because he shew what the wild bird did sing:

And

The seven Sages.

And his mother thereto did well consent,
Therefore he sent message incontinent.
Howbeit they did a far way from him dwell,
The messenger yet he bade to them tell,
That Alexander who was King of Egypt,
Would to them come with a great fellowship,
To eat and drink and with them make good cheer
In that countrie some nobels for to hear,
The messenger blythlie they did receave,
And rich rewards such like they to him gabe:
Saying their service at every time and houre,
Should be ready at the great Kings pleasour,
Howbeit they were not worthy of such thing,
For to receive with them a crowned King:
Yet not the lesse and please his grace to come,
With all our hearts he shall be right welcome,
The messenger again to the King went:
As they him said he shew incontinent
And what reward with blythnesse they him gabe,
And how blythlie the King they should receave.
And how ready they were at his command,
Him for to serve all time with heart and hand:
What eber his grace gabo them commandment,
Whereof the King was blyth and well content:
The day become the King took his journey,
With diverse Lords to passe the readie way:
Where his father and mother made dwelling,
Unknown to them of any other thing:
But he was King of Egypt and none other,
For yet none knew of his father and mother:

Except

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The seven Sages.

Except himself which knew well all the case,
And when they drew near hand his fathers place:
As they come forth ryding on their journey,
The knight his father met him by the way;
And when he saw the king comming with crown,
Incontinent off horse he lighted down.
With all honour and all good reberence,
Upon his knæ making obedience:
And when he saw his father take such painē,
He took him up and bade him ride again,
So chek for chek to the castle they rode:
Where there was cheir with all abundance made
And when they came unto the castle gate,
His mother came, and with blithnesse him met.
Kneeling to him he lighted and her kist,
But what he was the sooth nothing she wist.
She said to him since it pleaseth your grace,
To visite us at this time and our place.
We do to us your serbants great honour,
And we are blyth that it is your pleasour:
For ye are welcome to all that we finde here,
Euen as we may we shall make you good chere:
The time of day drew near all bownded to dyne,
His father came with a silver basen,
With rose-water unto his knæ kneeland,
And his mother with towell in her hand:
Saying mækly, pleaseth your grace to wesch,
And thereafter with some meat you refresh:
It is readie the cheer we may you make,
Praying your grace in patience to take:

The

The seven Sages.

The king this saw he smiled and then said
Unto himself there is none can abide:
For yet aside the godly providence,
He will have done by his perfitte prudence,
The nightingals song now I perceiue it true,
Which long ago to my father I shew.
When that he came to his window and sang,
That they should both be right blith for to gang,
With the towell and basen in their hands:
He for to serue as they were my serbands,
If I would thole them such thing for to do,
Now the same thing and matter is come to.
This in himself he said and no man knew,
For to no man as yet such thing he shew,
So he would not them thole to do such thing:
Howbeit that time he was a crowned king:
Saying sir knight I will honour your age,
Ye nor your wife shall do me no such homage;
It becommeth not such two aged to bying,
Water to wesch howbeit I be a king:
Take in patience forsooth I say you true,
For I have here other serbants anew.
Then said the knight to us it were honour,
So that it were unto your grace pleasure:
But in this case ye will not thole us do,
By reason we are not woorthy thereto,
Then said the king I do honour to age,
Such office gaineth to younger personage.
When to dinner was this good king set down,
And after him his Lords of great renown.

When

The seven Sages.

When he was set he gart set down his mother
 On his own side, his father on the other,
 Who intirely beheld ay his visage,
 If they could haue of him any knowledge,
 But none they had; age sicknesse and labour
 Canoe them misken his fassoun and fauour.
 The dinner done, the king to chalmers went,
 For his father and mother after sent;
 Who came to him with ail obedience,
 Bending to him service and reverence,
 He commanded all persons passe as they
 None but the knight and his wife to abide
 At whole command as he bade so was done,
 When was the doo on them thre closed soon,
 Then said the king to the knight and his wife,
 Haue ye no bairns? Quoth they, none upon life,
 Son nor daughter at this time haue we none,
 And to get mo we trust the time be gone.
 Then said the king, I speare for time bygone,
 Had ye any? or had ye neuer none?
 Then said the knight, for a son we had one,
 But it is long since he was dead and gone.
 Then said the king, In what death dyed he?
 Then said the knight, A naturall death truly.
 Then said the king, bee that not true but fail,
 Pee fail to mee, doubling to mee your fail.
 Then said the knight your grace I now require,
 What is the cause pee serbently desire?
 And to such thing what canseth you take heed,
 With such effect to lpear after his dead.

The seven Sages.

Then said the King without cause do I nought,
How your son died shew me your minde & thoughts.
If ye will nought shew forth the veritie,
A shamefull death but doubt ye shall both die.
When that they heard they fell down on their knees
Asking him grace forgiuenesse and mercie.
Then said the King yet will I honour age,
I cobet not of you so great homage:
I grant you leaue before me for to stand,
And so he raised them both up by the hand,
To that intent I come not in your places
You to betray in any sort or case:
For it is given me well to understand,
Ye put your son to death with your own hands,
And if that such thing come to the judgement,
We will be both condemned incontinent.
Wherefore to me the very truth ye shaw,
It is danger for such to hide the law:
Shew me the truth and I shall save you both,
From all perrill and keep you from all shaft.
Then said the Knight my life sir to me grant,
Of the true truth one word ye shall not want:
Then said the King fear not the truth to say,
And one credence here I shall save you tway,
Then said the Knight we had a son turelie,
Who well was seen in cunning and clergie:
Sicker cunning he had in science seven,
In all planets that moved under heaven,
He knew their course and all their strange aspects
Their pith their power and all their firme effects.

The seven Sages.

All herbes and trees right wonder well he knew,
What strength they had what pith and what vertue.
There was no fowle that euer flew with wing,
But he knew well in song what they did sing,
Into so far there was no herbe that sprang;
He knew the pith and als the fowles sang,
Upon a day befoze us he could stand
With basen water and towell in hand,
In the meane time that bonie fowle of sight,
The nightingale at our window did light;
And so began to sing her notes full good,
Well were the man (quoth I) that understood
Zon sweet singing and what the bird doth mean
Quoth he father so ye will not be fene,
I should you shew what yon bird sings so sweet,
And ebery note I shall to you interpret.
Quoth I dear Son I pray thee to me shaw,
To say the truth of no man stand thou aw:
Quoth he father so; sooth I stand in fear
It shall you craib her song when ye it hear,
Say, nay said I, of that ye have no doubt,
The birds song I pray thee tell me out:
Quoth he yon bird she meanes into her song,
By mother and ye are able to live so long;
While that ye stand befoze me as ser bands,
And blyth to hold the water to mine hands:
If that I will you suffer such to do,
Quoth I that day thou shalt neber come to,
And so at thort ere eber I took rest,
Into the sea so; to d;own I him ke C.

The seven Sages.

Then said the king, to you had ben no skath
 To his hands y^e had holden water bath:
 I think it had ben to you both y^e four,
 That your one son had come to such honour.
 Then said the knight, that same thing I confesse,
 In great furie I did it and w^oldesse.
 Wit and wisdom was went, will was ob'tain,
 Right and reason, and truth quite from me ran:
 So when wit wants, and strength of reason least,
 I count a man no better nor a beast,
 That runs on head, and looks to no reason,
 Right so did I when I my son did crown.
 Then said the king, I think it was folly
 For to work contrate the Basellie
 Of God alone, and his great providence,
 His wit, his will, and mightie ordinance:
 Y^e might well wit God of his sapience,
 That to your son had send him such science,
 To know the voice of the birds in the air,
 And it was God that coulde bet to come there,
 To sing that song as God her had directed,
 For in no sort he might no way neglected:
 Wherefore let none the man most mightiest
 Call him to work contrate which God hath best:
 For it passeth wit, power, and p^assance,
 To work contrate his mightie ordinance.
 Now y^e shall know the truth and veritie,
 I am your son which y^e kept in the sea,
 For the great God of his mightie goodness
 Hath me preserved from danger of dead,

And

The seven Sages.

And by his grace hath brought mee to this state,
 As I am now, and for mee did debate;
 For his foresight no way can be down smored,
 But evermore the same will be decoyed.
 As was he is, for none can work contrarie
 His providence, which surely I declare.
 Then the father and mother hearing that,
 For fear and lon fell to the earth down flat,
 Whom he took up with all humilitie,
 Saying, Father and mother fear not mee:
 Have ye no doubt of all that I have said,
 Rather with blith, joyous merite and glaid,
 With help of God no danger shall you feir,
 What ever you thinke I pray you take no feir;
 Ye shall all nought in geine nor yet peroun,
 Of all bygane I grant you plain pardoun;
 For ye shall finde that my might and welfare
 Shall be your glorie for now and evermore,
 Into this life so long as I endure;
 I have reason, yet two more yet and more.
 So with blithnesse with hat into his hand
 He kiss them both with heart laugh and
 Then the mother began right pitrouly,
 And the father the tear fell in his eye.
 Then said the king to still, and was praynought,
 For to my realm with blosse ye shal be brought,
 And with all glorie there shall ye honoured be,
 With all blithnesse, worship and dignitie
 Above my self except my kingly crown,
 Which is reserved to mine own person.

The Seven Sages.

So in that place he left certain serbands,
To rule and guide their comes, rents, & their lands,
Took his father and mother to him home,
Where they liued in honour and good fame
All their lifetime while God to death them dyed,
Guided the realm in iustice, peace and rest,
Unto the time tuncle was past of nature,
Ended their liues only to Gods pleasure.

How the Emperesse was condemned to dead
With her lover without mercie or remead.

Then Dioclesiane said to the Emperour,
Father, this tale I told to your pleasate,
Which I belibe right well ye understand,
Pea, every word, quoth hee, son I warrant.
It is a tale to be noted, I say,
Not one better I heard this many day.
Then said the son, and please your Majestie,
Howbeit that God had given such grace to mee,
Of wit, wilcome, and other great cunning,
Of diuerse things hath sent me understanding,
Yet this should in no wise minish your right,
Nor your honour, your majestie nor might,
But rather shoud the same lke and augment,
By right, reason, and als equal iudgement,
So in likewise the Kings grace and estate,
Which was by God onely predestinate,
Send by the bird to sing that he might hear,
Which in that case was Gods great messenger,
For had not been God gabe that bird such grace,

Sho

The seven Sages.

He had not sung such singing in that place,
The sons honour and als his dignitie
Took none honour from his father twé sá;
For to his mother it did none hinderance,
But rather was their honour to advance,
For ye have heard they were honoured alwayes,
Into this realm during their life and dayes.
Then said again to him the Emperour,
I now perceibe well the sons great honour;
Can no way pare his fathers might and gloze,
But rather ay to make it moze and moze:
Therefore I will the whole impire resigns
Into your hands, and ye therefore be king,
And guid the same, and have the rule and stér,
For I am old, and may not burthen beare;
But rather would bee set at rest and ease,
And ye the realm to guid as yee best please:
For I may not enture such businesse,
By reason of mine age and feeblenesse.
Then said the son, Having your graces will,
To that sentence no wise grant will I till;
But ye shall have ay the authoritie
During your life ever moze above mee,
To charge, command, to bid, and so; to do,
In all affaires that pertained you to:
All businesse that is laborious,
Acts and errands weightie and ponderous
Alwayes I will accept them upon mee,
You for to serve, as is my great dutie:
And ever shall the same night and day

The seven Sages.

To your pleasure in so far as I may.
 The Emperour commanded his Justice
 In judgement sit, and do forth his office;
 And the Emperesse in presence to cause bring,
 With her rebald, clad in womens clothing,
 Whom next her self hee caused soz to stand
 Her Ladies all in order near her hand.
 Then Dioclesane to the Emperour said,
 Father, your queen your honour hath degraded,
 Under all the world you are great Emperour,
 And it pertaines to your grace and honour,
 To do justice to all the same requites,
 For the same thing your Majestie desires,
 As well to poor as to the rich alway,
 Equall justice you should minister ay.
 Now I desire that you give right sentence
 Of the untruth falsed, and great offence
 Done and alleadgd by the Emperesse said,
 By counsell of her love in contrarie mee:
 By whose false means severall times I was forth led
 To the gallows to leave my life in wedne
 Als to your grace unfaithfull she hath been,
 Of her bodie not guiding as a queen,
 Which is well proved into your presence,
 By many signes and perfect evidence,
 Upon the which I ask and also desire
 Justice and right even as the cause requires;
 To your justice I would yet gave commend
 To give sentence but detain our fra hand,
 When the Emperesse heard this soe petition,

Upon

The seven Sages.

Upon the earth then flatlings she fell down,
At the Emperour asked grace and mercie,
But in no sort such thing there could not bee:
According to the law hee had proceed
To give sentence conform unto her deed:
Then had pause well to whom the deid was done,
To whom, when, where, how long, or yet how soon:
Then thereafter to make the punishment
As please the iudge to give forth his judgement.
Then said the Iudge, No way I can her clenge,
For her own deid it seif it doth revenge:
The perfect proof of her rebald and knave
Themselves both files, as all men may perceave:
Moreover the fault it is lese Basellie,
Done in contrare the crownes great dignitie.
Into so far that she beside his bed,
Then his son in gallions to bee led:
Therefore I give in open audience,
And pronounces now for extreame sentence,
That the Emperesse be bound to an horse tail,
Through ail the streets of the citie her trail,
Till she come to the place burnt for to bee
For her ppearde, that every man may see:
And als we give on her rebald sentence
For his knaverie, and his perverle offence,
Contrare the crown, mercilesse to be marterd,
On the rats rebin, hanged, drawn and quarterd:
After that his flesh to be casten to tykes,
To be devoured with dogs under the dykes;
And with the fowls that flee into the air,

The

The seven Sages.

The dogs leadings to take up to their skale;
 In memozie that he durst so presume,
 In contempt of the great Emperour of Rome,
 This sharp sentence was pronounced openly,
 To all people, and does it ratifie,
 Makes the same known, and to all men patent,
 As well absent, as they that are present:
 So they were both conformed to their offence,
 Done and demaund according to sentence,
 Given and pronounced by that most awfull Judge,
 Whereofra remed they had none nor refuge,
 But suffered death with everlasting shame,
 And ay to brook of great harlots the name,
 As woorthie was, for why continuall sin,
 With inuord heart euer to liue therein,
 But fear of God, or any repentance,
 Could them suffer such dolefull sad sentence,
 Howbeit that man such balwozte did not know,
 Yet God in heauen right well it heard and saw,
 For all things are to his eare ay patent,
 Therefore he found a subtle instrument,
 To make such thing to mans sight to be hend,
 Thus may we see of this Emperesse the end,
 Praying great God of us to haue mercie,
 And us forgive, Amen so may it bee.

A declaration to the Emperesse after her death.

O Faithlesse feeble fool, O ugly hore hol'd bure,
 O posond paddocks pool, O misshant mad mansture,
 Curst catiue creature, O Sathans seed all shent,

That

The seven Sages.

That ever yet wrought nature, or yet to life was lent:
Where was thy wisdom went when such folly thou fand?
Thy lust thou may lament that ever such took in hand:
Thou hast lost life and land, and all thy roiall rout,
Thy state no way could stand, it was so stinking stouze
Upon thee all cryes out, fie, fie for verie shame,
All womens seed do shout upon thy filthy name:
As wearied be the womb that brought thee in this life,
Ever to brook such blame, no worth thee wicked wife,
Rooted in sturt and strife, thy bow was ever bended,
Therefore but sword or knife thy life now hast thou ended,
So greatly thou offended unto an innocent,
That thou would never mend it unto this life present.
Thou would never repent, but wrought wrong with iniure
Now with shame thou art shent, head paction to all hures,
As while this world endures ever to brook that name,
With all quick creatures, with slander, lack and shame

The conclusion of this work.

NOW our Emperice hath suffered dead and gone,
Therefore as now we will let her alone,
With her harlot whole dayes they have ill spenden,
An ill entrie for common is ill ended,
As well appead in debet wirt them I way,
Of them as now no further will I say,
But in all haste go finally forth our book,
Because the same to do we undertook:
Therefore as now more time we will not spend,
But shew at short of the good Emperours end.
Within few dayes after this businesse,

The seven Sages.

The Emperour he took a sore sicknesse,
As pleaseſth God, and payed his naturall debt,
As the time came, and as the terme was ſet,
Diocleſiane then took the ſteir in hand,
And Emperour was of that countrie and land,
Kewold the impire with wiſdome and prudence,
Held his maſters in dayly reverence,
By whoſe wiſdome, his counſell and deſire,
He guided well his kingdome and impire,
That he preceid all his predeceſſours,
In riches, juſtice, wiſdome, and honours,
Of his lieges ſuch love he ſtill conqueſt,
That over all thing in earth they loved beſt.
His Maſters alſo they loved him ov'r all thing,
With all ſervice as their true Lord and King,
And ſo ended their dayes in groat honour,
In joy and miſth, and to the great pleaſure,
Of God alone, to whom all honour be,
Land, praſſe, impire, triumph, and dignitie,
Kingdome, renown, and joy perpetuall,
Loving and love, obedience ower all;
Health and vertue, and eberlaſting gloze,
Into all worlds both now and ebermore
Be to that Lord with all humilitie,
And to viſſill a drop of his mercie
On us ſinners, his gloze that we may ſee it,
To his pleaſure ſay every man ſo be it.

Finis quod Rolland.

A short declaration, when, and where, and
at whose request this book was translated
out of prose into meter.

AT the request of my Aunt called *Kait*
In our all time this quair I did translate,
Of all trim tearmes as yee may see denude,
Because she me protested air and lair,
As strange tearmes to cast out of my gair,
Saying to me she them not understood,
Requiring al that I would be so good
Womens honour to hold up and estate,
As ye may see, I durst not else but dude.

So in seven weeks this quair was clean complee
Out of plain prose, now keeping meeters feet,
Within the fort and towre of *Tamsalloun*,
When the English float beside *Inchkeith* did fleir.
Into the sea in that great burning heat,
Both Scots and English of *Leith* lay at the town,
With sharp assiege and garneist garrifoun,
On either sort where sundrie lost the sweet,
That same time I made this translation.

In merrineffe since my Aunt causde me make it,
I you require good readers for to take it,
In patience where faults are found correct them,
Yet were I loath over far that it were lacked,
If some verse halts, or any colours cracked,
For my request take out a pen and bleck them,
Because for haist perchance I did neglect them:
For if so bee I can no way defend it,
Excuse it self, and so this quair is ended.

THE

The Minor sayes
to his book.

IN haste go hie thee to some hole,
And hide thee, be not cald a book,
Go cown thee ov'r all black with cole,
Go smeere thee ov'r with smiddle smook,
Or scour pots with some greesie cook,
Or in some kitchin turn the speet,
Among Ladies thou dar not look,
For they will on thee with their feet,
For men of good thou art not meet,
They will thee hold of small availe,
What rests there then but yeeld thy sprin,
Or to tyr'd ticklers tell thy tale,
Thy rourall rime among them raile,
For honest men few will set by thee,
And I swear by the rood of *Craile*
Touching my part I here deny thee:
My counsell is that thou cause cry thee
Among cowlinks and common hures,
All good women they may defie thee,
Of all thy cracks they take no cures,
But fond fillocks up in the moores,
Who first you read some skinner hang them,
See on them thou work all injures,
Passe on and fend thy self among them.

F I N I S.

